Hafa Adai!

NMC moves forward with master plan. PAGE 3

CCC, US, and CNMI Labor will be asked for explanation. PAGE 5

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Saipan Tribune

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$11.2M awarded to repair Garapan roads

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration has awarded a $11.2-million grant to the CNMI to rehabilitate the roads in the core Garapan tourist area.

This EDA grant, which was announced last Friday, is expected to help create nearly 300 jobs and generate more than $1.3 million in private investment. It will be used to upgrade streets in the Garapan area, where so many tourists spend time. Streets will be widened to approximately 24 feet with a minimum of 6 feet of sidewalks for tourists' safety and comfort. New lighting, landscaping, and street markings and signages will be

See $11.2M on Page 4

AS GOOD AS NEW AGAIN

After seven years of neglect, the Dandan Children's Park is finally renovated and is now available for public use. Just last Monday, members of the House of Representatives' minority bloc, the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, and a few other agencies helped rehabilitate and repair the entire basketball court, repainting the court, pavilions, and parking areas, fixing the fence that surrounds the court, and removing overgrown vegetation.

NEIL FAMA

Story on Page 2

90 get vaccinated on Rota

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

ROTA—A total of 90 people on Rota got inoculated with the Moderna Inc. COVID-19 vaccine, raising their total to 353 people getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Muña

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña confirmed in a phone interview that 90 more people got vaccinated on Rota.

According to Rota Mayor's Office's public information office Facebook page, online registration for Phase 1B for Feb. 20 is now open. This

See ROTA on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 7, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,622	21	7,643
Recovered	7,410	6	7,416
Active	77	21	98
Deaths	129	0	129
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			116,945

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	0	133
Traced via Travel Screening	107	0	107
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			172

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Artman driver arrested for alleged homicide

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Artman Environment Corp. dump truck driver Ed Fabia was arrested over the weekend on charges related to the auto collision in Puerto Rico on Saipan last Feb. 1 that killed Raju Bhai.

In a brief phone interview with Fabia's wife, she said her husband was arrested

See ARTMAN on Page 4

Biden reverses Trump on waiver for FEMA grants

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said over the weekend that President Joseph R. Biden Jr. has announced that the federal government will cover 100% of the CNMI's COVID-19-related costs under the Federal Emergency Management Agency grants.

Sablan said Biden made the decision just two weeks af-

See BIDEN on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Bank of Hawaii announces a touchless way for its debit card customers.

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NATION
Inmates at a St. Louis jail set fires, caused flooding and broke out fourth-floor windows.

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ASIA
About 2,000 protesters rallied against the military takeover in Myanmar's biggest city.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

House minority bloc, partners restore Dandan Children's Park

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REPORTER

In just five days, members of the House of Representatives minority bloc and their staff, with the help of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation and other partners, completed a major restoration of the Dandan Children's Park within the Dandan Homestead.

The restoration work—called the House Minority's First Unified Community Project—began on Monday, Feb. 1, and was completed last Friday.

The park used to be covered with overgrown vegetation, the pavilions filled with graffiti. The basketball court was not functional and its floor was stained with debris from many months of soil buildup. Now the area is cleared of vegetation. The pavilions are newly painted and covered with beautiful murals. The basketball court's boards and rims are new. The court's floor is newly painted with thermoplastic paint. The parking lot is also newly painted.

Minority bloc members said the restoration project marked their first ever inter-precinct collaboration for the community.

Minority bloc spokesman Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan) told reporters at the park Friday afternoon that shortly after the inauguration of the 22nd Legislature, they got together under the leadership of minority leader Rep. Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan) and they talked about some of their goals and plans for this term.

"And what you're seeing today is the community outreach project aspect of our plans," Demapan said.

TanHoldings president and chief executive officer Jerry Tan said they learned about the restoration project early last week. "We actually stopped by and took a look at what's going on," said Tan, who is also chairman of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers.

He said they learned that the park has been out of commission for many years. "I looked around the neighborhood and said, 'Wow! There must be a lot of kids here.' So, we said, 'Yeah, let's get involved and help out,'" Tan said.

Tan said he gave the group a lot of credit because they restored the park in just a matter of days.

"I haven't been here at night, but I understand the lights were turned on and the kids were already flooding the place," said Tan, adding that basketball courts should be restored so children can come out, enjoy playing basketball, and just stay active and healthy.

Demapan said they plan to move into every precinct, represented by the minority, to work together with their field staff to bring positive change to the villages of their precincts.

Demapan said that, as a representative of Precinct 1, together with his three colleagues from Precinct 1—Reps. Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan), Roy Ada (R-Saipan), and Joseph Flores (Ind-Saipan), they're very proud to begin this project here in Dandan, with the support of their minority colleagues from other precincts.

"This project also would not have been possible without the support of our partners," said Demapan, mentioning the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers' Public-Private Partnership, the Saipan Mayor's Office, and the Department of Corrections.

"The Tan Siu Lin Foundation…made a significant contribution to help us defray the costs of transforming this children's park to what you see today," Demapan said.

He said the mayor's office provided equipment, while DOC also partnered with the project. "So it has been a really collaborative effort by so many stakeholders. And we're very proud to present this project to all of you today and in particular to the community of Dandan, where today the office of minority is pleased to return the park back to the people of Dandan," Demapan said.

He said a lot of the work was done primarily by the community workers of all minority offices, as well as the minority members themselves.

Demapan said they also put a lot of their own personal touches. The "So we welcome you all to Dandan Children's Park, reborn and ready for the community once again," said Demapan drawing applause from lawmakers, their staff, partners, and some community members.

When asked about the costs of the restoration, the lawmaker said "it's priceless" and that they haven't quantified everything. "But just to see the kids come back last night and play and express their happiness and their joy about having their park and their basketball court back, you cannot put a price tag on that," Demapan said.

He said there was no appropriation for this project as it was all funded by their work and their staff, as well as the contributions of private partners, government agencies and the Saipan Mayor's Office.

As to why they chose the children's park as their initial project, Demapan said they believe that investing in a facility like the park help nourish and develop children.

"Investing in a facility like this will not just bring the ca-

See PARK on Page 4

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:	)	CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0256
SERAFIN ANGUI AMIREZ	)	ORDER GRANTING REQUEST TO CONTINUE HEARING
Decedent.	)	

Based on the Petitioner's request and FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, the Court **HEREBY GRANTS** the Request to Continue Hearing. Byung Soo Jun's Petition for Administration and Appointment of Administrator is now scheduled to February 25, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. to take place at Guma' Hustisia Supreme Court Courtroom, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950.

SO ORDERED this 2nd day of December, 2020.

HONORABLE JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

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NMC moves forward with master plan

The construction of one building that will become the flagship structure of the Northern Marianas College will take a while, but NMC will still move forward with its overall master plan for the new campus.

In a news briefing last Monday, NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico said that NMC is working on establishing the framework for the current and future growth and development of the campus, including classrooms and other learning spaces, offices, laboratories, and open spaces.

The flagship building, Eliptico said, will be the main building where students will go. It'll have student services, cafeteria, offices, and more.

The federally funded construction of the new campus is estimated to cost between $75 million and $100 million. Eliptico said that the whole campus is expected to be completed in 2024.

NMC is also making sure the campus will also be open to the community. Eliptico said that NMC will have walkways where people can jog. He also wants to make a pathway where NMC students will be able to walk to nearby cafes, like Java Joe's and Mango Six.

The new gym will be reimagined in a larger context of health care and a health facility. NMC's new gym will have a place for basketball, volleyball, and even its own gym.

"We want to make sure there are exercise rooms for both your physical and mental health. The elements of the gym are necessary. For example, probably put a couple of classrooms in there, but other functional facilities that will be part of a health care facility, and not just the basketball or volleyball court, weight rooms, and other things that support health needs," said Eliptico, adding that health trends are evolving, and NMC wants to be sure that there's general space for larger multifunction rooms.

"We are thankful to the U.S. Department of Education, the governor, the NMC Board of Regents, the guidance of regulatory agencies, and others for their support and help with our recovery activities," he added. ***(Justine Nauta)***

Apatang assures stray dog issue still a priority

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang assures that the Dog Control Program is still very much active in controlling the number of stray dogs on Saipan and encourages the community to register their dogs.

In an interview with Apatang, he said the staff of the Dog Control Program have been going to villages and visiting the homes of those who have dogs but don't have them registered with the mayor's office.

"We just want to let the community know that we're coming, so those people who are continuing to ignore the program and continue to raise dogs and not take care of them [that] we have rules for animals. They need to register their dogs and then you need to tie them or put them on a leash," said Apatang.

Dog Control Program manager Martin Pangelinan said that any dog that is found roaming without a program tag is considered a stray dog and will be impounded. "One thing that people got to think of is that any dog that we come across… if they don't have a tag, we consider them stray dogs. So that's what owners have to think about, that if we capture a dog and it does not have a tag from the…Dog Control Program, we consider it a stray dog," he said.

According to Pangelinan, owners who claim dogs that are not registered with the Dog Control Program will pay a fee of $46. This includes a registration fee, a first impound fee, a boarding fee, and a penalty fee. Owners have two weeks to claim their dogs. If they don't, the dog will be euthanized.

In response to complaints that a group of dogs has been terrorizing those who are taking a walk at the American Memorial Park, Apatang stated that they have been setting traps out in the community to catch stray dogs and cats. "I will communicate with the park rangers over there to see if we can set up traps," he said.

Recently, the Saipan Mayor's Office and the Legislature broke ground on an animal shelter building that will be built at the Department of Lands and Natural Resources agricultural station in As Perdido.

According to Apatang, this new animal shelter will open in the middle part of this year. It is a 5,000-square-meter animal shelter that will have two separate sections on one large floor area, with one section for the kennel and the other section for offices, animal examination rooms, clinics, restrooms, a two-vehicle indoor garage, 18-vehicle parking stalls, and a laundry room.

The semi-concrete kennel will have 40 animal holding stalls. The shelter will have its own wastewater and sewer system, as the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. wastewater sewer line system is not available in the area. The total project cost is over $500,000, which is partially funded by disaster assistance awards, capital improvement funds, and local delegation appropriations.

Staff of the Dog Control Program have also been going out to pick up dogs who have been run over.

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Atalig said to settle local court case

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Atalig

Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig is expected to take the same route as his co-defendants in his case with the Superior Court and settle.

Atalig is expected to participate in an adult diversion program with the CNMI Office of Adult Probation to settle the case filed against him in Superior Court, like his codefendants.

Atalig's codefendants in the case, former/current resident directors, disposed the cases against them through a plea agreement or by participating in an adult diversion program.

The program is a voluntary alternative to criminal adjudication that allows a person accused of a crime to fulfill a set of conditions or complete a formal program designed to address, treat, or remedy issues related to or raised by the allegation. Upon successful completion of the conditions of the program, the charges against the defendant are dismissed or not filed.

Atalig is currently charged with one count of misconduct in public office, which is punishable for a period of not more than one year, or a fine of not more than $1,000.

Initially, Atalig and seven of his current and former resident directors were charged by the Attorney General's Office with misconduct in public office in connection with their alleged participation in a Republican campaign rally on Guam.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CLASS OF THE YEAR
Mount Carmel School recently awarded its graduating class of 2020 as the Class of the Year during its weeklong celebration of Catholic Schools Week or "CSW." Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

$11.2M

From Page 1

installed. In all, 10,685 linear feet of roads will be repaved.

"Rebuilding our roads after the devastating impact of Super Typhoon Yutu is critical to our long-term recovery here in the CNMI," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in a statement from the U.S. Commerce Department. "I want to thank [EDA], our federal partners, and our community for their resilience in the face of natural disasters and a global pandemic. With this funding, we will create hundreds of new jobs for our local workforce and ultimately build a stronger Marianas for the future."

In a separate statement, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) thanked the Biden administration for the grant. "Congress appropriated these disaster recovery funds in June 2019 and the Commonwealth quickly submitted an application for Garapan revitalization, but the previous administration did not act," Sablan said. "So, the congressional office met with the Biden transition's Commerce Department team shortly after the election and asked that the Commonwealth's disaster grant applications be prioritized."

Altogether, the Commonwealth submitted seven applications worth $95 million from the disaster funds Congress appropriated in Public Law 116-20. Up to now only one application had been approved: $10.7 million for a workforce development and training facility at Northern Marianas College.

This project is funded by the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-20), which provided EDA with $600 million in additional Economic Adjustment Assistance Program funds for disaster relief and recovery for areas affected by hurricanes Florence, Michael, and Lane, typhoons Yutu and Mangkhut, wildfires, volcanic eruptions, and other major natural disasters occurring in calendar year 2018, and tornadoes and floods occurring in calendar year 2019, under the Robert T. Stafford Act. These disaster appropriations are separate from EDA's normal, annual appropriation.

"The [EDA] plays an important role in helping communities impacted by natural disasters not only rebuild, but rebuild stronger," said Dennis Alvord, acting assistant secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. "This project will help the Northern Mariana Islands respond to the economic impact of Super Typhoon Yutu by making roadway infrastructure improvements that will support the capacity of employers to grow and provide high-skill, high-wage employment opportunities." ***(PR)***

ROTA

From Page 1

includes government employees, federal employees, autonomous employees, teachers, bank employees, airlines, seaport, and business establishments.

There are only 200 slots that are available and vaccination operations will be from 8am to 3pm. Additionally, Phase 1A second dose is scheduled for Feb. 21 from 8am to 1pm.

When asked about quarantine procedures on Rota, Rota Mayor's Office public information officer Ivan Mereb stated that people going to Rota are first quarantined on Saipan, as part of the Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' directive. Once they are all clear, then travelers will continue with their travel to Rota.

"The directive would have them clear first in quarantine. …I believe they would be tested for COVID-19 at the quarantine site on Saipan until they are cleared from quarantine. [That's when] they would be able to board a plane to Rota," said Mereb.

It was also learned that there are no direct flights from Guam to Rota, except for cargo shipments.

COVID-19 in Guam

According to the Joint Information Center on Guam, the COVID-19 vaccination clinics continue to administer COVID-19 vaccines from Feb. 9 through Feb. 13 at the University of Guam Field House from 1pm to 7 pm.

"These clinics will prioritize those due for their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. Pfizer/BioNTech's first doses will be limited to 50 per hour for eligible individuals. No first doses of the Moderna vaccine will be administered," said JIC. Additionally, Guam residents are advised to schedule an appointment online via Eventbrite.

Due to a higher demand for second dose vaccines for Feb. 10, there is a separate Eventbrite link to schedule appointments. Additionally, those clinics will prioritize those due for their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. Pfizer/BioNTech first doses will be limited to 50 per hour for eligible individuals. No first doses of the Moderna vaccine will be administered.

JIC stated that those who are getting their vaccines should bring a digital or hard copy appointment confirmation and a photo ID. Those due for their second dose are reminded to bring their COVID-19 immunization card.

ARTMAN

From Page 1

last Friday evening and the bail was set at $100,000.

According to court documents, Fabia is being charged with traffic signal violation, false report, and homicide by vehicle.

Fabia will appear in court today for his initial hearing.

Saipan Tribune reached out to Dre Pangelinan, Department of Public Safety spokesperson, to confirm the arrest but there was no response.

In a photo circulating in various social media outlets, it captured the stop light at the Puerto Rico intersection after the accident and the north facing traffic light was green. However, in a separate surveillance video of the accident taken from a nearby building, it showed that the silver Honda Ridgeline where the victims were on was at a full stop before turning into the Smiling Cove Marina and it was during this turn that the Artman dump truck rammed into it.

In a separate video posted on social media, a voice that is allegedly that of the dump truck driver could be heard saying that he was already in the middle of the intersection when the Honda Ridgeline made a left turn toward the marina, making it impossible for him to stop the truck on time. The voices in the video were talking in Tagalog.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, a source within the company said the driver of the dump truck and his helper, who also witnessed the incident, told him and the police a consistent story: the traffic light was green and the silver Honda Ridgeline took the turn into the marina when it wasn't supposed to.

The source said it's easy to believe that Artman was at fault but the light can't be seen. It's also possible that the silver pickup truck ran a red light.

Bhai, one of the passengers of the silver Ridgeline, was pronounced dead on arrival at the Commonwealth Health Center at about 1:39pm. The other occupant was treated and admitted for serious injuries. The vehicle's driver was treated and released. The two occupants in the garbage truck were not injured.

BIDEN

From Page 1

ter the Trump administration denied Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' request for a waiver of the local match required for COVID-related FEMA grants.

The delegate said the new president understands that the CNMI and state governments throughout the nation are cash-strapped because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We cannot afford a local-share of FEMA assistance. At the same time, we cannot let that cash shortage slow down our response to COVID or prevent people in need from getting help," he said.

Sablan said Biden sees the big picture and made the right call.

Sablan said the president's directive means all work eligible under FEMA's existing COVID-19 policies, including increasing medical capacity, non-congregate sheltering, and emergency feeding distribution, going back to January 2020, will be reimbursed 100% by the federal government.

He said the president is also expanding the activities eligible for 100% reimbursement.

"This includes personal protective equipment and disinfecting services and supplies. It also includes safely opening and operating eligible schools, child-care facilities, health care facilities, domestic violence shelters, transit systems, and other costs incurred after Biden became president," Sablan said.

Torres recently stated that the government is going to appeal the denial of the Commonwealth's request for a waiver on the local match required for COVID-19-related FEMA grants.

Torres had expressed optimism that FEMA under the new Biden administration will reconsider the CNMI government's appeal because they are fully aware of what is happening in the CNMI.

Acting FEMA administrator Robert Fenton's Jan. 15 denial letter told Torres that, based on their review of all of the information available, it was determined that the increased level of funding that Torres had requested is not warranted.

PARK

From Page 2

maraderie and the spirit of unity to the children of the village, but pride to the village so that the people of this community have something to be proud of," he said.

Demapan said they started work last Monday and that day, Friday, was only their fifth day. "But if you see some of the pictures, the before pictures and the before video footage that we'll be sharing with you guys, you probably think that today was Day 14," Demapan said.

He said the whole facility from the pathways to the basketball court, was water-blasted. The basketball court was completely coated with thermoplastic paint, then the backboards and the rims were donated. All the pavilions have been restored.

"When we came here, the pavilions were covered in graffiti. So in the spirit of the graffiti, we decided to put murals up," said Demapan, adding that Rep. Joel Camacho (R-Saipan), who is known for making popular murals in the north side of the island, was able to bring that spirit here to the south side.

Saipan Mayor David Apatang said the minority bloc and their staff did a super job and he recommended that they also restore the San Antonio basketball court and its premises.

"I noticed the basketball court is down. We need to refurbish that so that young kids can play basketball, take their time and spend their time after school," Apatang said.

Demapan said Flores has already brought that up so they are going to calendar the project as the minority bloc moves from precinct to precinct.

"We're going to also have to manage the timeline for each project so that we can schedule the next project," he said.

IF IPI CW WORKERS ARE SENT HOME TODAY WITHOUT PAYING ¾ GUARANTEE

CCC, US, and CNMI Labor will be asked for explanation

If Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's stranded CW workers are sent home today without paying them three-fourths of their wages as guaranteed in their employment contract, the CNMI House of Representatives' Committee on Gaming intends to call in the Commonwealth Casino Commission and both U.S. and CNMI departments of Labor for an explanation.

Specifically, committee chair Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said he would need an explanation why the rules and regulations governing Commonwealth-Only Transitional Workers in the CNMI can so easily be ignored.

Propst told Commonwealth Casino Commission executive director Andrew Yeom last Thursday that he will be calling another meeting requesting his presence, along with his team, CCC board chair Edward C. Deleon Guerrero, all CCC commissioners, U.S. Labor, and CNMI Labor.

"Guest workers in our Commonwealth should be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve, to be treated like family. This is our island way," said the lawmaker in a letter to Yeom.

Yeom and CCC's team and IPI chief executive officer Ray N. Yumul appeared before the House Committee on Gaming's meeting last Thursday.

Yumul said Thursday night that he has been in court all morning and has not had a chance to verify Propst's statement at this time.

Yumul said he, however, knows that IPI lawyer Michael Dotts is handling the U.S. Labor case in federal court and that they are trying to follow the court's instructions as a priority.

"It was brought up in court that should employees have to leave the CNMI so as not to violate the rules governing the visa program and to minimize the risk of those people from being labeled as overstayers, IPI is prepared to deliver checks once ordered by the court to either a designated representative, the U.S. Labor or Wage and Hour's local office, for example, for those people that have to leave," he said.

In his letter to Yeom, Propst disclosed that IPI gave the CW workers plane tickets to leave the CNMI by today, Feb. 8. He did not indicate how many CW workers were given tickets.

While these workers do want to return to their home countries, Propst said they do not want to leave without getting paid what they are owed. "How can they leave the CNMI with empty pockets, without being paid? Is this fair? Is this legal? Is this humane?" the lawmaker asked.

Propst

He pointed out that when IPI hired these quest workers under the CW-1 program, IPI agreed that it will "abide by the following conditions with respect to its CW-1 workers and any workers in corresponding employment."

These conditions, Propst said, include assurances and obligations of CW-1 employers under the Code of Federal Regulations. He said such provision state that "the employer must guarantee to offer the worker employment for a total number of work hours equal to at least three-fourths of the workdays of the total period of employment specified in the work contract, beginning with the first workday after the arrival of the worker at the place of employment or the advertised contractual first date of need, whichever is later, and ending on the expiration date specified in the work contract or in its extensions, if any."

Propst said these are binding federal rules and regulations that cannot be willfully ignored. Yet, he said, IPI has done so, and will continue to do so, unless the CCC, along with the U.S. Labor and CNMI Labor, ensures they follow and adhere to these CW-1 rules and regulations.

"If they do not, then they jeopardize the entire CW-1 program for the Commonwealth. Is this fair to other companies who have followed all CW-1 rules and regulations?" Propst asked.

Citing another provision of the Code of Federal Regulations, Propst noted that in layman terms, IPI must pay its guest workers the "three-fourths guarantee" as stipulated in the CW-1 agreement.

Propst said while IPI executives and their attorneys may ask whether or not this was in their actual contract, this should not matter, as this is a rule under the CW-1 program.

"Are they CW-1 workers? Yes. Did IPI agree to these rules and regulations when they hired them? Yes. Should they be paid what they are owed based on the three-fourths guarantee? Yes," the lawmaker said.

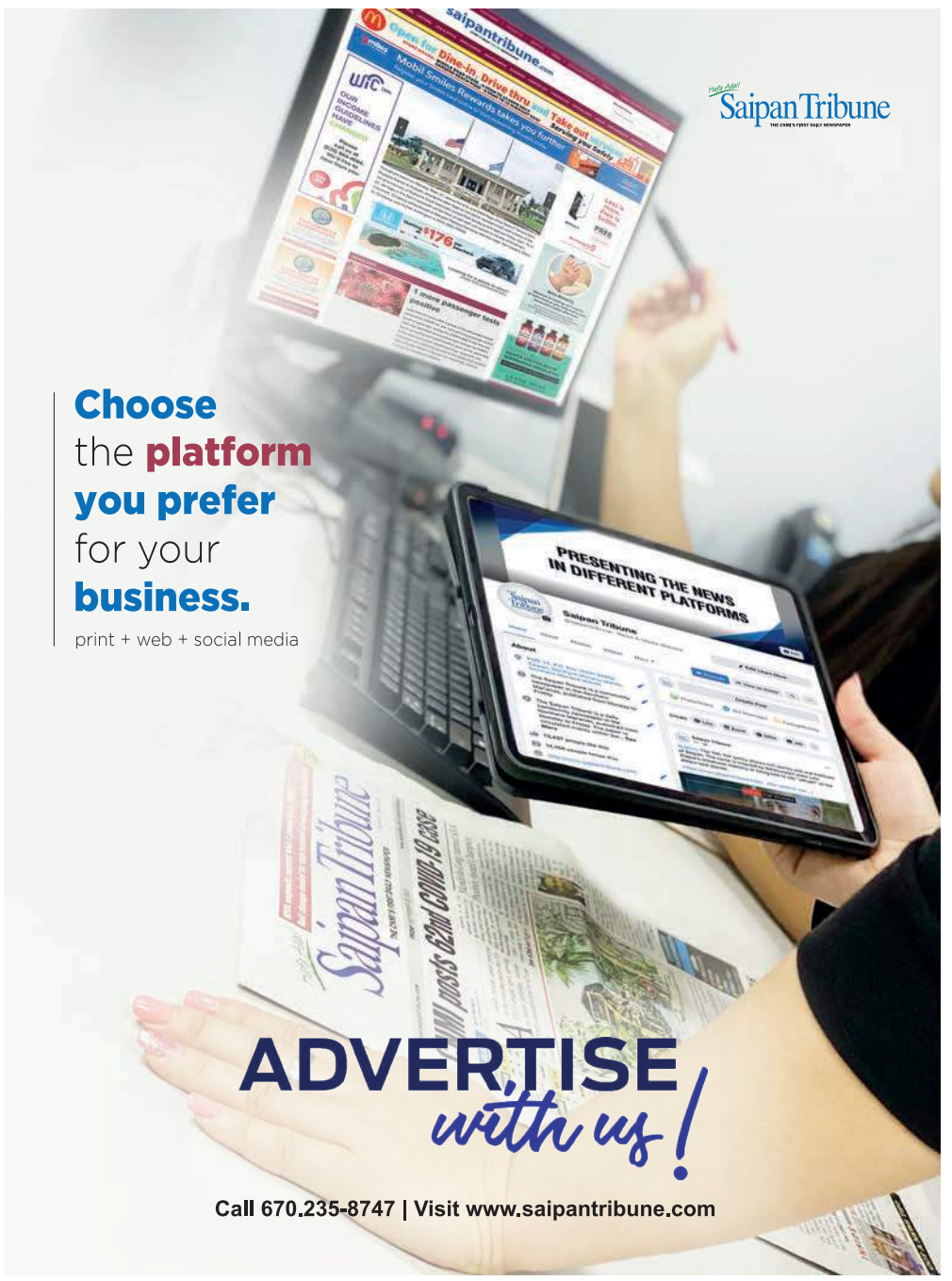
He said the last group of guest workers from IPI who left in September and October 2020 were promised they would get paid, yet to date, Propst said, none of them has received a penny.

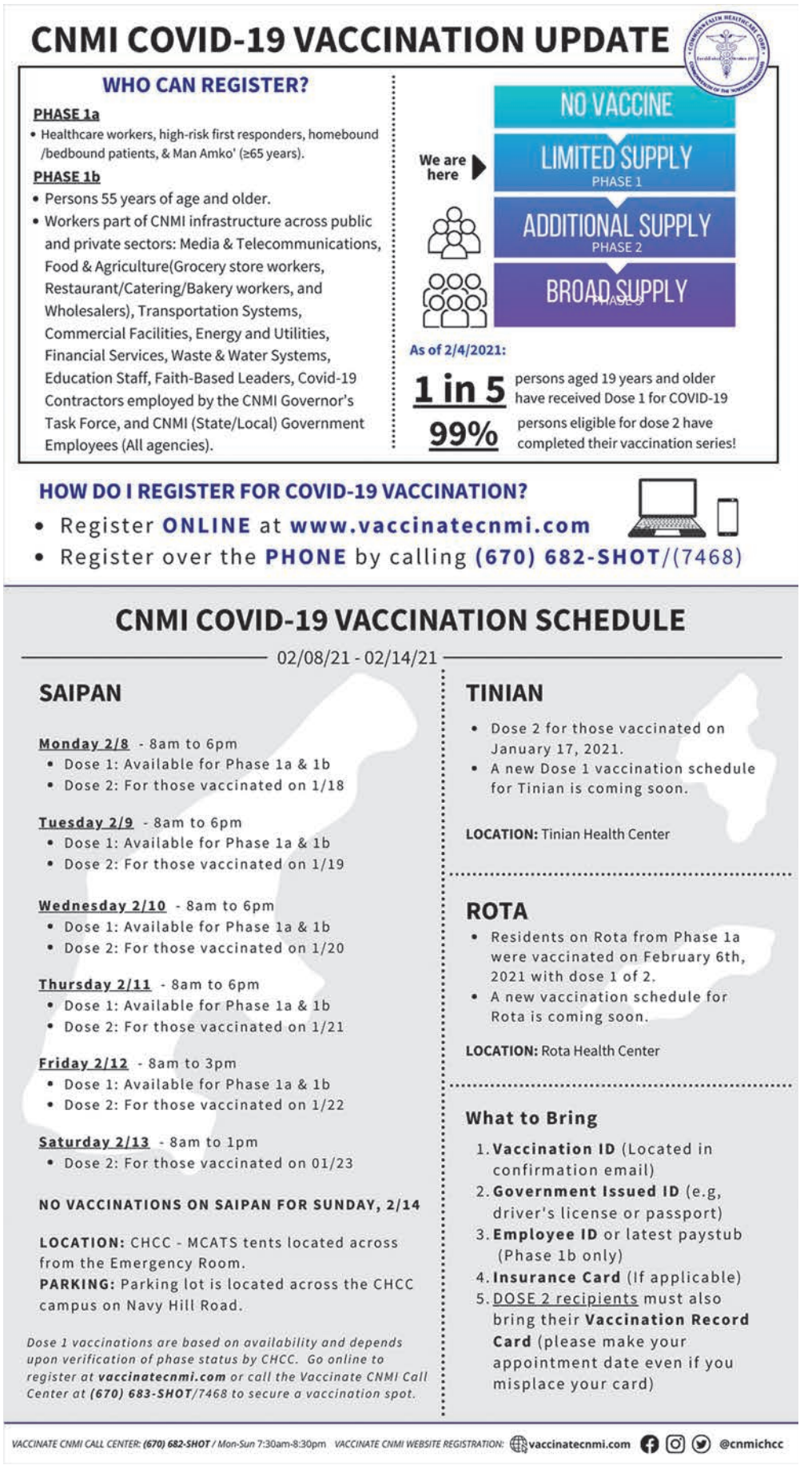
"If these guest workers leave in a few days without getting paid, they are likely to suffer the same fate," he said.

Propst told Yeom that they would like to see the casino industry not only survive on Saipan, but live up to its promises, which include a $7-billion investment. "But it cannot do so when IPI cannot even pay its workers what they are owed," he said.

Propst said before any further construction at IPI's Imperial Palace Resort in Garapan continue, before any work moves forward, the CNMI must see that their workers are paid and all vendors are paid.

"Then, and only then, can we have a serious discussion about the future of our casino industry on Saipan," he said. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***




CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE
WHO CAN REGISTER?
PHASE 1a
• Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound /bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).
PHASE 1b
• Persons 55 years of age and older.
• Workers part of CNMI infrastructure across public and private sectors: Media & Telecommunications, Food & Agriculture(Grocery store workers, Restaurant/Catering/Bakery workers, and Wholesalers), Transportation Systems, Commercial Facilities, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Waste & Water Systems, Education Staff, Faith-Based Leaders, Covid-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force, and CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies).
We are here
NO VACCINE
LIMITED SUPPLY
PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY
PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY
PHASE 3
As of 2/4/2021:
1 in 5 persons aged 19 years and older have received Dose 1 for COVID-19
99% persons eligible for dose 2 have completed their vaccination series!
HOW DO I REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION?
• Register ONLINE at www.vaccinatecnmi.com
• Register over the PHONE by calling (670) 682-SHOT/(7468)
CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE
02/08/21 - 02/14/21
SAIPAN
Monday 2/8 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/18
Tuesday 2/9 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/19
Wednesday 2/10 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/20
Thursday 2/11 - 8am to 6pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/21
Friday 2/12 - 8am to 3pm
• Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/22
Saturday 2/13 - 8am to 1pm
• Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 01/23
NO VACCINATIONS ON SAIPAN FOR SUNDAY, 2/14
LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.
Dose 1 vaccinations are based on availability and depends upon verification of phase status by CHCC. Go online to register at vaccinatecnmi.com or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at (670) 683-SHOT/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.
TINIAN
• Dose 2 for those vaccinated on January 17, 2021.
• A new Dose 1 vaccination schedule for Tinian is coming soon.
LOCATION: Tinian Health Center
ROTA
• Residents on Rota from Phase 1a were vaccinated on February 6th, 2021 with dose 1 of 2.
• A new vaccination schedule for Rota is coming soon.
LOCATION: Rota Health Center
What to Bring
1. Vaccination ID (Located in confirmation email)
2. Government Issued ID (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. Employee ID or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. Insurance Card (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their Vaccination Record Card (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)
VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: (670) 682-SHOT / Mon-Sun 7:30am-8:30pm VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE REGISTRATION: vaccinatecnmi.com @cnmichcc

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-015

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE WATER & WASTEWATER CERTIFIED OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms for Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program for the islands Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project is funded by the US Department of Interior-Office of Insular Affairs.

Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$100.00** for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-21-015, Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program"* to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on February 19, 2021**. Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Proposal shall be submitted on the provided Proposal Forms. Proposals will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal under the contract. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Request for Proposals should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the Proposer, awarded a contract.

This Request for Proposals does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract(s) is contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Board of Director's approval. The contract(s) will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 29, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address-manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Vivian Santos, Human Resources Manager via email-Vivian.santos@cucgov.org; Francisco Matsunaga, HR Generalist, via email francisco.matsunaga@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Senior Administrative Support Technician via email- marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Extra flights, ferry for Tinian's Pika Festival

Star Marianas Air, in cooperation with the Marianas Visitors Authority and Tinian Mayor's Office, will extend its normal hours of operation during the 17th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 13-14, 2021. In addition, limited ferry service will also be available.

On Feb. 12-14, Star Marianas scheduled flights will be extended by four hours, with the last flights leaving Tinian at 9:30pm. Flights will leave Saipan hourly at the top of the hour (starting at 8am) and leave Tinian at the bottom of the hour (starting at 8:30am).

The ferry is available on Feb. 13 and Feb. 14, departing Saipan at 10am and departing Tinian at 8pm on both days. The *Super Emerald* ferry will depart from the Commonwealth Ports Authority dock in Lower Base, Saipan. Passengers must check in one hour before departure. Departure time is prompt but may change based on ocean conditions.

Ferry round trip cost is $40 for ages 3 and older. For one way, the cost is $20 for ages 3 and older. The ferry is free for children ages 0-2. Advance ticket purchase is required and will be accommodated on a first come, first served basis. Ticket purchases may be made at the MVA Office in Saipan. Cash payments only will be accepted.

Due to capacity restrictions, Pika 50K Bike Race participants only with proof of registration will have a reserved ferry to Tinian on Feb. 12.

A series of health safety measures recommended by the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and COVID-19 Task Force will be implemented at the festival. The Department of Public Safety will manage the entry of and take the temperature of all attendees at the festival site who will be issued a wristband once cleared each day. Handwashing stations will be installed around the event area, and attendees are required to wear face masks. Clear shields will be installed at all booths to prevent direct contact between vendors and customers. Tent seating will be 6 feet apart by family or group.

The festival will be held from 4pm to 11pm on Feb. 13 and from 4pm to 11pm on Feb. 14. The Pika 50K Bike Race at 6:30am on Feb. 13, funded by the Tinian Mayor's Office, with cash prizes for first, second, and third places in several categories. Bikers may contact Dawn Sarmiento at dawnsarmiento@yahoo.com or 287-3667 to register.

The festival, knowns as "Pika Fest" among locals ("pika" means spicy), pays homage to Tinian's small but famous "donne sali" hot pepper. Activities will include food sales, live entertainment, competitions, arts and crafts sales, and more. The 18th Tinian Municipal Council will co-sponsor prizes for the male and female categories of the crowd- favorite hot pepper eating contest. Other competitions will include "estafao pika" (spicy stew) cooking, cha-cha, tug-of-war, "umang" (hermit crab) race, sack race, and a home-made canoe race.

The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held at the Fiesta Grounds in San Jose, Tinian, adjacent to Kammer Beach. Limited hotel accommodations are available at Tinian Ocean View, Lorilynn's Hotel, Tinian Street Motel, Fleming Hotel, Green Lion House Hotel, and the Marpo Valley Inn. Free camping is available at Kammer Beach, Taga Beach (toilets, barbecue pits, and outdoor showers available) and at the adjacent Tachogna Beach (toilets, barbecue pits, and indoor showers available).

For more information, contact Tinian field operations supervisor Vida Borja at 433-9365 or e-mail at vborja@mymarianas.com or MVA community projects manager Martin Duenas at 664-3200 or email mduenas@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-017

CNMI STREETLIGHT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlight luminaires to promote energy and cost saving measures on the power distribution system in Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United states Department of the Interior (USDOIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-21-017, CNMI Streetlight Efficiency Project)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 4, 2021** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 10, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Power Division Engineer via email adrian.reyes@cucgov.org; Alfred Palattao, CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-018

RELOCATION OF UTILITIES AT ROAD (A-F) AND ROUTE 205/206 TINIAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general relocation of gate valves, water meters, waterlines, fire hydrant assembly and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Defense (USDOD). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USDOD.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **February 2, 2021 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-018, *Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 Tinian*"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 25, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 09, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician, Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

'Add PR, USVI, Guam, A. Samoa to SSI'

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Nonprofit organization and parity advocate Equally American has urged the House Committee on Ways and Means in the U.S. House of Representatives to urge their support for including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa in the Supplemental Security Income program.

Weare

In a letter to Equally American wrote to committee chair Richard E. Neal (D-Massachusetts) and ranking member Kevin Brady (R-Texas) last Friday, Equally American president Neil Weare said the current situation with the Supplemental Security Income program "is not just unfair and discriminatory, it is unconstitutional."

He said the SSI program "is a crucial lifeline for disabled, blind, and low-income adults and children throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands, [yet] otherwise eligible Americans living in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa are arbitrarily excluded from accessing SSI benefits.

"As the First Circuit recently held, there is no rational basis for categorically excluding otherwise eligible Americans from the SSI program simply because they live in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, or American Samoa," Weare added. "But Congress should not wait for the Supreme Court to affirm the First Circuit's opinion."

"[Rep] Jenniffer González-Colón (R-Puerto Rico) has proposed a bill to include Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa in the SSI program," Weare pointed out. "Equally American applauds her bipartisan leadership alongside her colleagues from each of the territories and urges Congress to enact this crucial legislation as soon as possible. Lives literally depend on it," Weare said.

Equally American is a nonpartisan public interest organization that works to advance equality and voting rights in U.S. territories. ***(PR)***

Search for missing mariner off Guam is suspended

The U.S. Coast Guard suspended last Thursday the search for a missing mariner from the fishing vessel *Miyamaru No. 18* off Guam

The mariner, an Indonesia native, remains missing.

"Working with the Navy, Australian Defense Forces, an Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System vessel, and good Samaritans aboard 15 fishing vessels, our crews conducted a total of 15 searches, over the course of 42 hours, covering over 6,553 square miles," said Lt. Cmdr. Victoria Saxon, a search and rescue mission coordinator at Joint-Rescue Sub-Center Guam. "While it is not an easy decision, we have suspended the active search pending any further new information."

At 11:30pm, Sunday, a mariner aboard the fishing vessel *Miyamaru No. 18* attempted to swim to a nearby fishing vessel. The crew lost sight of him and began searching the area. At 2:27am, Monday, JRSC Guam watchstanders received a report from the Japan Coast Guard notifying them of the situation.

The crew of the Coast Guard cutter *Kimball* was diverted from its patrol nearby to assist with the search area.

The weather conditions on scene were winds of 23 mph and seas up to 6 feet. ***(USCG)***

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

JOB OPPORTUNITY

POSITION TITLE: CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

NUMBER OF OPENINGS: ONE (1)

SUMMARY:
This is a highly responsible professional financial and accounting position in the company's fiscal activities. The incumbent is directly responsible to the Finance Director and is expected to function in the absence of the Finance Director.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Acts as primary support to the Finance Director in the financial administration of the Company's policies and procedures.
- Responsible for maintaining in full integrity of the company's financial statements including but not limited to Balance Sheets, Profit and Loss Statements and Cash Flow Statements.
- Must possess a strong background in general ledger preparation and its financial analysis and account reconciliations on a monthly basis. Makes periodic reviews of both revenues and expenses.
- When necessary, makes direct contact with other governmental agencies and Company departments.
- Responsible for all capital assets project. This is a primary assist duty.
- Assist the Finance Director in the administration of personnel affairs within the Finance Department.
- Responsible for compiling fiscal estimates and preparing special fiscal year-end reports as may be required.
- Responsible for compliance with the Company's accounting procedures including follow-up and testing to ensure proper adherence thereto.
- Establishes and maintains a registry of standard and special computer programs utilized by the Finance Department, including utilities programs.
- Establishes procedures that ensure full and current account receivable collections and accurate account payable payments.
- Performs other duties as may be directed by the Finance Director.

Supervises: 6 employees, 2 accountants, 1 clerk, 1 cashier, 1 auditor, and 1 assistant.

REQUIREMENTS:
- Education: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (maybe foreign equivalent).
- Experience: 60-months as Accountant or Chief Accountant.

RATE PAY: $51,000.00 / Year

Interested applicants, please send resume to:
INTERPACIFIC RESORT SAIPAN CORP.
Dba: PACIFIC ISLAND CLUB SAIPAN
Attn: Human Resources
P.O. Box 502370
Saipan, MP 96950

This notice is being provided as a result of the filing of an application for permanent alien labor certification for the relevant job opportunity. Any person may provide documentary evidence bearing on the application to:

Certifying Officer
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Atlanta National Processing Center
Harris Tower
233 Peachtree Street, Suite 410
Atlanta, GA 30303

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-GOV-040

Roof Repair & Coating at 1300 Block Government Buildings, Capitol Hill

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the ***Roof Repair & Coating at 1300 Block Government Buildings*** in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available on **February 8, 2021** at the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan. **All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.**

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect and with the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (NMIAC) §70.30.3-725 Gratuities and Kickbacks and §70.30.3-730 Prohibition Against Contingent Fees. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a pre-bid conference on February 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m at the project site, beginning at Building 1314, in Capitol Hill, Saipan. Questions concerning this project shall be directed to Sunny Aldan in writing by e-mail: sunnyaldan.cip@gmail.com, on or before **March 1, 2021** to the Capital Improvement Program, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or fax (670) 664-2408. All questions submitted after the given deadline will **NOT** be entertained. All responses to inquiries will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Sealed bids must be marked ***ITB20-GOV-040Roof Repair & Coating at 1300 Block Government Buildings, Capitol Hill.*** For bidders within the CNMI, one (1) original and two (2) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan no later than **10:30 a.m. ChST, March 10, 2021.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI **MUST** fill out the Notice of Intent to Bid Form on (PAGE 3) in order to receive this additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their actual bid documents. This Notice of Intent to Bid Form may be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services through facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or e-mailed to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp but must be received no later than 10:30 a.m., ChST, March 10, 2021. ***Note that failure to submit this Notice of Intent Bid Form will be subject to the rejection of a bid.*** For bidders located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and two (2) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **March 10, 2021,** mailed to the Acting Director of Procurement Services at P.O. Box 510008 C.K., Saipan, MP, 96950, and must be received no later than **March 19, 2021**. Failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan at ***10:30 a.m. ChST, March 22, 2021.*** However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be open at ***10:30 a.m. ChST March 10, 2021.***

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashier's check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check. If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00.
Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract. Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Government Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be $200.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Notice to all Proposers/Bidders located outside of the Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands. This Notice of Intent MUST be filled out and submitted on or before the given ITB/RFP submission deadline to the Acting Director of Procurement Services via email to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp or via facsimile to (670) 664-1515. Note that failure to submit this required document will be subject to rejection of bid/proposal.

BREACH OF ETHICAL STANDARDS
(To be part of Solicitation for quotes, ITBs and RFPs)

- ***Gratuities.*** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any person to offer, give or agree to give any employee or former employee, or for any employee or former employee to solicit, demand, accept or agree to accept from another person, a gratuity or an offer of employment in connection with any decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, preparation of any part of a program requirement or a purchase request, influencing the content of any specification or procurement standard, rendering of advice, investigation, auditing or in any other advisory capacity in any proceeding or application, request for ruling, determination, claim or controversy, or other particular matter, pertaining to any program requirement or a contract or subcontract or to any solicitation or proposal therefor. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725(a).
- ***Kickbacks.*** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any payment, gratuity or offer of employment to be made by or on behalf of a subcontractor under a contract to the prime contractor or higher tier subcontractor or any person associated therewith as an inducement for the award of subcontractor or order. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725(b).
- ***Contingent Fees.*** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for a person to be retained, or to retain a person, to solicit or secure government contracts upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage or contingent fee, except for retention of bona fide employees or bona fide established commercial selling agencies for the purpose of securing business. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-730.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a proposal if in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

Francisco C Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Half of half-baked

We know that most of the founders—most notably Washington, Hamilton and Adams—greatly feared what they called "faction," or what we today call partisanship, or party politics.

You don't have to be Hamilton or Adams to see why.

What happens is that party becomes a substitute for country and ideology, or the party line becomes a substitute for common sense, practicality and reason.

Consider the debate about how to deliver Round 3 of COVID-19 relief.

The Democrats want something "bold" and dramatic—something that will cost $1.9 trillion. The Republicans want something more modest—in the $600 billion range—because, well, it is hard to say. Partly this seems to be the only way to differentiate themselves and partly they are trying to channel the now long-forgotten ideal of fiscal accountability, which used to be GOP gospel.

For the past four years, 90% of the Republicans have been silent as the federal budget was busted and busted again. There is a wide credibility gap to be made up here.

Meanwhile, many Americans are heartened by the fact that members of the opposition party in the Senate—10 of them anyway—have any plan at all and are not simply and wholly in opposition to anything the president proposes.

We are also heartened by the fact that Republican legislators asked a Democratic president for a meeting, he accepted, and a fruitful and civil discussion was had.

Words like "compromise" and "comity" are in vogue again and that is a far cry from a riot at the Capitol and the vice president being whisked away for his own safety.

We should be encouraged by civility and a president and an opposition both willing to listen.

But here is another truth, one below the encouraging one: The Democrats are going to push their plan through via the budget reconciliation process (which Republicans have often done in the past). This will happen on a party-line vote. The Republicans are not yet fully serious about an alternative. And both sides need a better plan.

According to Karen Tumulty of The Washington Post, the Biden/Democratic plan would send checks of $1,400 to some families making in excess of $300,000 a year.

How in the world is it "progressive" to send money to people most Americans would regard as quite wealthy? They are surely not struggling.

The whole idea of another relief measure is to prime the pump, yes—to infuse money into the economy.

But it is also, or should be, to help people who are really hurting.

What is needed is a two-pronged refinement of relief plans—some sort of means test for aid and some targeting toward those suffering the most. In that second category would be the restaurant industry and rural areas of the country.

The Republican plan, an outline of a plan, really, at least aims at individuals making $50,000 or less.

But even this should be graduated and refined: The individual making $25,000 or less needs more help than the one making $50,000. It is hard to see why the individual making $100,000 should get any kind of check, unless he has just

See HALF on Next Page

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WHERE ELECTED OFFICIALS
CARRY OUT THE IMPORTANT BUSINESS
OF RUNNING THE COUNTRY
WATCH OUT FOR THE LASER BEAM!
MIKE SMITH
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/UAS

Democrats drew a line against Marjorie Taylor Greene's violent threats. That's a good place for it

By JON HEALEY
Los Angeles Times

Jon Healey is the Los Angeles Times' *deputy editorial page editor.*

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., has a self-awareness problem.

At a news conference Friday morning, the freshman congresswoman blasted the media for "addicting people to hate"—then said the duly elected Democrats constituted a "tyrannically controlled government," called one of her Democratic colleagues a communist (after having called her a liar), and pointedly refused to renounce her call last year for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to be tried for treason.

If we are addicted, Mrs. Greene, you're one of the pushers.

Greene's problems with discernment clearly extend to her GOP colleagues too. House Republicans warned Thursday that Democrats would be setting a precedent that would come back to haunt them if they stripped Greene of her committee assignments for her history of provocative remarks. It wasn't an idle threat; Republicans have already indicated to Democrats that at least one of their members might be sanctioned if the GOP regained the majority.

Greene

But all 219 Democrats who cast votes on Thursday moved ahead to punish Greene anyway, joined by 11 of the 210 Republicans. That's because they saw Greene as breaking a different norm, and the punishment setting a different precedent, than Republicans did.

Judging by the remarks on the House floor, the vote wasn't really about Greene's loony conspiracy theories, even the anti-Semitic ones. It wasn't about her denying the reality of the plane crashing into the Pentagon on 9/11. It wasn't about her enduring fealty to Donald Trump and his efforts to cling to power (despite Greene's claim to the contrary in a fundraising appeal Thursday).

It was about the violent threats she made or endorsed against Democrats in Congress.

Greene's scorched-earth pugnacity is hardly novel—her incessant criticism of Democrats recalls 1990s Newt Gingrich, although with fewer rhetorical flourishes. Nor is she the only one who has difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy when discussing her opponents—the hyperbole from Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., about President Donald Trump comes to mind, not to mention the musings of Arizona's Republican representatives.

Where Greene crossed the line was in the violent threats against her future colleagues that she voiced or endorsed on her Facebook page. Combined with her gun-rights zealotry—what kind of person chases after and taunts a school shooting survivor in the name of defending the 2nd Amendment?—such comments as Greene's call in 2019 for her followers to go to Washington, "shut down everything" and "flood the Capitol building" to instill fear in Democratic lawmakers are undeniably menacing.

"No one else on this floor has called for violence against other members and law enforcement," said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., the sponsor of the resolution to remove Greene from her committees. "Only one member has done that, and refused to back down. That is the precedent that we are dealing with today."

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., brought to the House floor a blown-up image of one of Greene's Facebook posts during the campaign. The post featured Greene, dressed in a black blazer and holding an assault rifle with a scope, next to a collage of pictures of Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan.

"I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle when they take this vote: Imagine your faces on this poster," Hoyer said, as quoted by the Hill. "Imagine it's a Democrat with an AR-15. Imagine what your response would be and would you think that that person ought to be held accountable?"

Although Greene had told the House she no longer believes in QAnon and some of the other bat-brained conspiracy theories she had espoused, she didn't renounce the violence-tinged comments and endorsements. Nor did she apologize to the House—for anything. The first public "I'm sorry" came at Friday's news conference, in blanket form: "I'm sorry for saying all those things that are wrong and offensive."

The Republicans who defended Greene on the floor somehow missed the connection between her threats and Democrats' outrage. Instead, they argued either that her comments were off the table because she made them before her election, or that they were no worse than the questionable or offensive comments that Democratic representatives had made. They contended that removing Greene from her committees set a precedent for House majorities deciding which members of the minority are unfit to fulfill all the duties of their office.

They're right about the possibility of escalating removals, although that power has always been there. After each party's leadership assigns its members to committees, the choices must be ratified by the full House (and they routinely have been). But going forward,

See DEMOCRATS on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Demystification of power politics is a long-term process. Let's continue…

'RICK'S COLUMN'
By RICK PEREZ
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.

Influence and power

The Marianas Islands, the Western Pacific, and the East Asia regions have been influenced by European expansionism for centuries. America has followed this Western-style approach to conquest since its inception. The outcome of World War II presented the U.S. with the opportunity to write the international rules in its favor, which included the complete colonization, altering and shaping of Guam, the CNMI and her ancient Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization.

Postwar Japan was reconstructed with deep American military and intelligence involvement. The U.S. succeeded in strategically shaping how Japan and its national government would go about doing America's bidding throughout the region. The U.S. saw initial limited success at containing Russia in a war of agency fought on the Korean Peninsula, followed by an extended Cold War and America's defeat in Vietnam.

Today, America continues to underwrite a post-Cold War security umbrella throughout the Pacific Basin and East Asia, working closely with a medium length list of partners while doing little to nothing to support the reversal of congressional and Pentagon sponsored human rights violations—environmental, political, linguistic, social, and cultural—made against the Chamorro people of Guam.

Stabilizing? Destabilizing?

America, however, has also been an overall stabilizing factor in the broader region for decades. Now America's security framework is experiencing its greatest challenge since its postwar laydown over seven decades ago. The ability of the United States to exert uncontested influence and power has waned, in part because of China's rise and willingness to take on American economic and military primacy.

This great power rivalry can be measured and observed through a variety of units and goalposts. One unit in which Sino-American relations are viewed is through the lens of developments taking place in the South China Sea. The South China Sea represents a key unit of measure because it is one of the planet's most important waterways, where 30% of the world's trade passes through—to include massive amounts of Middle Eastern oil—and where over 50% of the world's fishing vessels troll. All this is taking place above substantial proven and unproven oil and natural gas reserves. So far, China appears to be ahead using this unit of measure because it has succeeded at taking and building up two island chains within the South China Sea that remain historically disputed areas.

Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party

China is a regional East Asian military power and a world leader in technology, green technology and digital communications. General Secretary Xi Jinping continues to amass power as he builds out China's economic base and undertakes expansionist foreign policy measures intended to grow overall material prosperity and Chinese influence throughout Oceania, Southeast Asia, Australia and Europe. Xi Jinping is attempting to rewrite American-led post-World War II international norms using the Belt and Road Initiative as the centerpiece to create a Chinese-led geopolitical order, outside and inelastic to American influence.

China will continue to grow its power as it jumpstarts new ways to drive additional developments in artificial intelligence, communications, electric vehicle and bus use, financial technology, and health care technology with the full support of the CCP.

America in relative decline

America has taken huge losses from the massive intellectual property and technology theft spree sponsored by China. The United States' position of power has been damaged. America is also grappling with historically high levels of national debt, spending huge amounts on military considerations, struggling with high unemployment rates, and a toxic political landscape. The United States has fallen behind in keeping up with the CCP's efforts to digitize its currency, which has additional implications for America's standing in the world. Trillions of dollar-denominated transactions take place every day worldwide and total nation state holdings of the U.S. dollar as the prime currency reserve is increasingly being threatened.

America's strategic mistake was going to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we lost. The outcome of these wars is that trillions of dollars have been spent, hundreds of thousands of people have perished, and China has become much stronger.

More clarity and understanding is required

A clearer articulation of what constitutes America's overall long-term strategy toward China is sorely needed because much is at risk and unanswered questions persist.

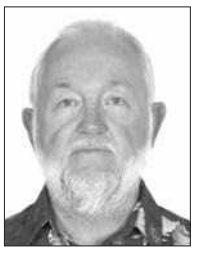
How long will America continue to underwrite huge national security bills in the Western Pacific and East Asia regions that are inviting massive environmental and cultural damage to the islands of our ancient Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization? What is the long-term strategy to combat climate change with China as a partner? What role will American diplomacy have in the region as a tool of imperial power and statecraft? Can America really contain or control the Chinese and vice versa? Or are we still holding on to a Cold War mindset that no longer applies?

What is clear is that historic levels of hyper-militarization and destructive military activity taking place throughout the Marianas Islands continue to be performed in part to deter China from starting a war with the U.S. or its allies. The United States has calculated that it cannot further diminish its perceived standing, and ability to project lethal military power, and thus influence, in the region.

The problem with this view is that as America seeks to deter war with China and support and protect its economic and political interests and commitments, it has also produced permanent damage to the Marianas Islands and plans to further destroy or control already rare and pristine human, cultural and environmental resources contained throughout our ancient island chain without fully seeking the prior, unentangled, or written consent of our Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization. This is fascist. America can do better, much better.

COVID Concerns/ Conniption A.W.A.R.D. Burns

LITERARY NOOK
By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired teacher and has been named a poet laureate of Tinian. He has taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.

COVID Symptomatic Sympathizing Senryu Sonnet

Among seniors still around
some Covid info will confound
new virus and vaccine varieties.

Virus mutants merge
an international surge
we need a planet purge.

Folks are fraught with fear
multiple vaccines are bought
shots in the arm are sought.

Follow CDC safety norms
to stop new variant spread
or soon you might be dead.

45's COVID plan was obfuscation
46 is trying to alleviate that situation.

A 45 A.W.A.R.D. Comes Forward

title: Affinity With Any Right wing Dictator -
an award for conniptions from a crazed mind
whose penchant for bling and lies left him blind
and deaf to many leaders of sound democracies
and prone to tantrums, hyperbole and hypocrisies
about himself and his great warm relationships
with multiple murderous rulers and dictators
he bragged about love letters that he received
from the leader of North Korea, baby boy Kim
suffering from diarrhea of the mouth about him
now close to his own club he can play daily golf
shoveling steak and chocolate cake into his mouth
his base money flow may slow maybe even grow
of all his crimes and tax fraud we may never know.

DEMOCRATS

From Page 8

the question will be what line will a member have to cross in order to prompt the majority to revoke a minority's assignments.

With their action against Greene, House Democrats (and the 11 Republicans who voted with them) have drawn the line at threatening physical harm to the institution and its members. That's a good place to put it. We'll see whether the GOP finds a different spot.

Meanwhile, Greene said she's delighted to have more time to spend "to talk to a whole lot more people," presumably about what she calls "the policies which disgust me"—abortion, foreign aid, immigration, the federal debt and gun rights were the touch points she cited Friday. "If I was on a committee," she said, "I'd be wasting my time because my conservative values wouldn't be heard."

She may have even more time if Democrats decide to take up the resolution by Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., to expel her from the House. That's a battle for another week.

HALF

From Page 8

been laid off.

Some people who got the last round of checks did not prime the pump. They banked their checks.

Let's keep that in mind for Round 3. Let's try to learn and not just be more knee-jerk and reckless.

The good news is that the president has indicated that he is willing to revisit targeting and income limits—down the line.

What is at work is the "one medicine" syndrome that infects our two major parties. No matter the problem, the Democrats say regulate. No matter the problem, Republicans say deregulate. The trouble is, the problems change.

What would you think of a doctor who, no matter the malady, prescribed aspirin and chicken soup? What if the problem is cancer? Or a doctor who always prescribed chemotherapy?

What if the problem is a cold?

In this instance, as so many others, the Democrats say, "Let's throw a big pile of money at it and see what happens." The Republicans say, "Let's throw about a third as much."

But half or a third of a half-baked plan is not a plan, or an alternative.

Democrats might be better off buying and delivering vaccines with most of the dough. That would be better than transfer payments to the wealthy.

Republicans don't even have a plan for aid to towns and cities, most of which are broken and some of which will have to lay off first responders.

Compromise, yes, but on more thoughtful plans that actually are plans.

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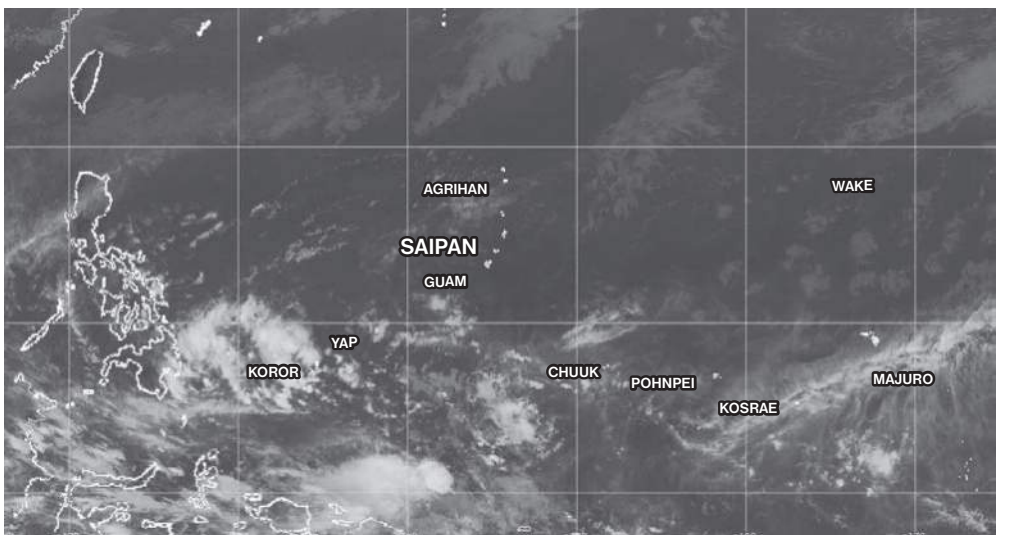
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph	Partly cloudy for Guam and Rota, mostly cloudy for Tinian and Saipan. Isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy for Guam and Rota, mostly cloudy for Tinian and Saipan. Isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:09 AM, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The trade-wind disturbance has moved west of the Mariana Islands overnight and is over the Philippine Sea at 142E this morning. A shear line persists across Tinian and Saipan near 15N, and patchy showers are still present this morning.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	85° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	83° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	83° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	83° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Tuesday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	6:19 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	3:24 AM	2:53 PM	-
Tuesday	4:25 AM	3:53 PM	-
Wednesday	5:22 AM	4:52 PM	-
Thursday	6:14 AM	5:51 PM	-
Friday	7:01 AM	6:46 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	79° / 64°
Beijing	Cloudy	39° / 27°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	68° / 63°
Honolulu	Showers	77° / 68°
London	Showers	46° / 43°
Los Angeles	Showers	64° / 56°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	84° / 72°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	73° / 57°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	78° / 68°
New York	Mostly Sunny	40° / 28°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	43° / 36°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	48° / 43°
Pusan	Sunny	48° / 34°
Rome	Showers	55° / 43°
Salem	Showers	68° / 51°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	43° / 28°
Seoul	Sunny	37° / 21°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	48° / 36°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	47° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
6:27 AM	High Tide	1.58
11:16 AM	Low Tide	1.17
4:05 PM	High Tide	1.70
11:50 PM	Low Tide	-0.50

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

BOH launches contactless debit cards

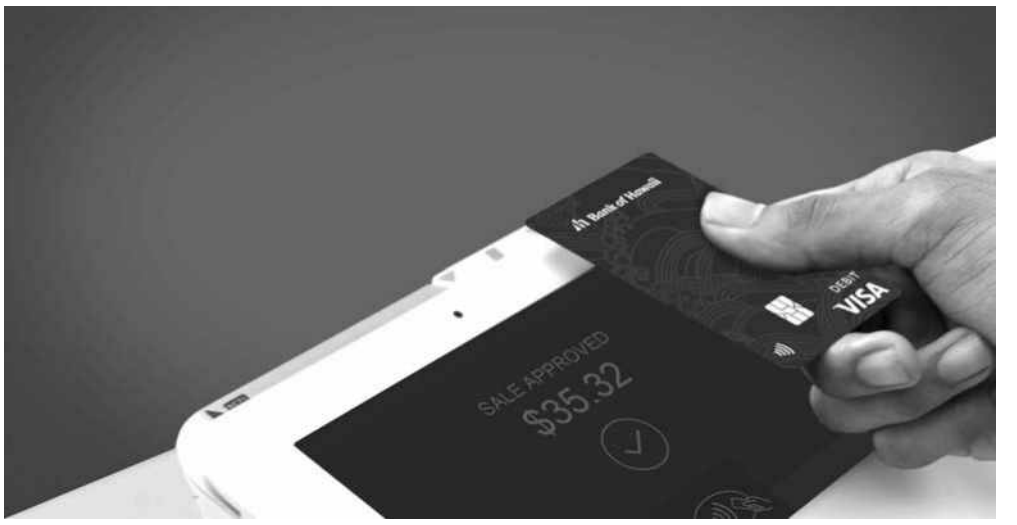
HONOLULU, Hawaii—Bank of Hawaii announces a touchless way for its debit card customers to pay for in-person purchases at retailers with its new contactless debit cards.

Bank of Hawaii is the only local bank to roll out a full mass reissue of contactless cards. The bank will replace debit cards for all of its customers with the new contactless version over the next several weeks, regardless of expiration date. Customers will retain their same card number, but replacement cards will have a new expiration date and CVV (the three-digit "card verification value" on the back of the card). PINs will not change. The rollout is expected to be complete by April.

» Delivery of touch-free debit cards to all BOH customers announced

Consumers can simplify their checkout experience in two easy steps. To make a purchase, customers should look for the contactless symbol on the merchant terminal. Then, tap or wave the card at or near the symbol. Most local businesses already have contactless-enabled terminals in place, including CVS/Longs Drugs, Costco and Target. This no-touch payment option takes seconds to complete. It is not only much faster than swiping or inserting a card into the terminal, but also much safer and just as secure.

Contactless card payments provide the same encryption as EMV chip payments — a one-time security code unique to each transaction is generated, which the merchant terminal sends to the bank, and the bank confirms the payment.



BOH

Bank of Hawaii will replace debit cards for all of its customers with the new contactless version over the next several weeks, regardless of expiration date.

"Bank of Hawaii is pleased to be able to provide all of our debit card customers new contactless cards enabling them to safely, simply and securely make purchases utilizing touch-free technology," said Ruth Erickson, Bank of Hawaii's executive vice president in the Marketing Division. "With safety and security being a priority for the bank, we believe it important to replace all of our customers' cards as quickly as possible."

BOH continues to invest in delivering digital options and services to its customers. While the chip and magnetic stripe may still be used on the bank's new touchless versions, contactless debit cards are rapidly becoming one of the most popular ways to pay for purchases. This trend began well before the pandemic, and concerns over health and safety of in-person shopping further increased contactless adoption.

For more information about contactless debit cards, visit www.boh.com/contactless. ***(PR)***

Biden wants fast COVID aid, but minimum wage hike in doubt

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden laid out his case Friday for moving fast to pass $1.9 trillion in coronavirus relief, but even as he opened the door to proceeding without Republicans, he conceded that a key element of his plan—hiking the minimum wage to $15 per hour—was unlikely to become law.

The stakes for the county and economy were amplified Friday morning by the release of the government's jobs report for January, which showed that hiring had stalled to a pace that could hinder a return to full employment for several years. Some 406,000 people left the labor force last month as deaths from the pandemic have surged.

"A lot of folks are losing hope," Biden said in a speech at the White House. "I believe the American people are looking right now to their government for help, to do our job, to not let them down. So I'm going to act. I'm going to act fast. I'd like to be doing it with the support of Republicans ... they're just not willing to go as far as I think we have to go."

The jobs report landed shortly after Senate Democrats cast a decisive vote to muscle the COVID relief plan through the chamber without Republican support, a step toward final approval next month. Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate, her first.

Biden's speech solidified a marked shift in tone and strategy for a president who entered the White House pledging bipartisanship and met on Monday with 10 Republican senators pushing a slimmed-down $618 billion alternative. Biden concluded in his Friday speech that aid at that level would only prolong the economic pain.

Still, the president acknowledged Friday that one of his most ambitious proposals, raising the minimum wage, would likely be left out of the final bill.

"I put it in, but I don't think it's going to survive," Biden said in an interview with "CBS Evening News" anchor Norah O'Donnell, adding he would push to raise it in a standalone bill. "No one should work 40 hours a week and live below the poverty wage. And if you're making less than $15 an hour, you're living below the poverty wage."

Tax forms help reveal extent of unemployment fraud in US

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Unemployment agencies across the U.S. became lucrative targets for criminals when they were bombarded with claims last year as millions lost jobs due to coronavirus shutdowns.

Now, simple tax forms being sent to people who never collected unemployment benefits are revealing that their identity was likely stolen months ago and used to claim bogus benefits that have totaled billions of dollars nationwide.

Unemployment benefits are taxable, so government agencies send a 1099-G form to people who received them so they can report the income on their tax returns. States are mailing 1099-Gs in huge numbers this year after processing and paying a record number of claims.

In Ohio, Bernie Irwin was shocked two weeks ago when she opened the mail and found a 1099-G form saying her husband had claimed $17,292 in unemployment benefits last year. The only problem: Jim Irwin, 83, hadn't worked in 13 years.

Bernie Irwin, 86, said her daughter-in-law and a friend also received the tax forms. So did Republican Gov. Mike DeWine, his wife, Fran, and Republican Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, even though none of them had claimed unemployment benefits.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
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Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on ***Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 8am*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

I. **Meeting Call to Order**
II. **Determination of Quorum**
III. **Review and Adoption of Agenda**
IV. **Review and Adoption of Minutes (01/27/2021)**
V. **Public Comments**
VI. **Chairperson's Report**
  A. CHCC Opioid Response Team – (Dateline for Public Comments Jan 6, but still accepting)
    1. SB 21 – Medical Assistance – Drug Related Overdose – Prosecution for Possession
    2. SB 21 - Good Samaritan Act (Amendment)
    3. SB 21 – CNMI Drug Overdose Policy (Opioid Overdose Reversal Medication)
VII. **Director's Report**
  A. CHCC Opioid Response Team – Public Comments
    1. Meeting with House Legislative Committee on Health and Welfare
    2. Financial Report Update
    3. FSMB 2021 House of Delegates Virtual Meeting – Voting Delegate Request - Dateline to Submit: February 26, 2021
VIII. **Investigator's Report**
IX. **Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature**
  A. Governor's Office
    1. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Call
  B. Legislature
X. **Old Business**
  A. Proposed Regulations with Amendments – Dr. Glenda George
    ➢ § 140-50.3-4700 – Psychology
    ➢ § 140-50.3-4900 – Substance Abuse
XI. **New Business**
XII. **Pending Applications for Board's Review**
  A. New Application
    1. Andrew Bertagnolli – Telehealth Clinical Psychology
  B. Renewal Applications
XIII. **Miscellaneous Business**
XIV. **Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.**
XV. **Announcements**
  A. Next Meeting Date
  B. Adjournment of Meeting

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)

(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2021-006

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: March 10, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Building Maintenance Services for NMHC Housing Units in Rota

Project package will be available on **February 08, 2021,** at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" tab.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held via video teleconferencing on February 19, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab. Bidders are encouraged to email the Procurement Officer of their intent to participate in the pre-bid conference via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net at least one day before the conference. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Northern Marianas College
Procurement and Property Management
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 237-6824
www.marianas.edu

CONSULTING SERVICES
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
NMC RFP 21-001

Northern Marianas College (The College) is soliciting competitive sealed Proposals for the Consulting Services for the Aquaculture Parks, Saipan, Tinian and Rota projects.

Specifications and Scope of Work packets may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing February 08, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m.** for the Electronic packet, please send request to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Pre-Proposal conference is scheduled for February 17, 2021 09:00am. attendance is strongly recommended. NMC continues to practice social distancing due to the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions. The pre-proposal conference will take place through video conference technology, Zoom. Zoom ID No.: 939 6768 1365.

Electronic Proposal submission:
NMCRFP21-001@marianas.edu
Due Date/Time: 4:00 pm, March 11, 2021, Chamorro, Standard Time (CNMI).

Sealed Proposal, hard copies submission:
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P, As Terlaje Campus
Due Date and Time: 4:00pm, March 11, 2021, (CNMI).

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA, authorized under the Smith Lever Act Section 3b & 3c award# 2017-41100 and the Hatch Act as amended August 11, 1955, award #2019-31100 (Regular).

In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

Approved by:

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

The Northern Marianas College is a Land Grant Institution accredited by the Senior College and University Commission of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges.

Nation

Inmates at St. Louis jail set fires, break out windows

Inmates at a St. Louis jail set fires, caused flooding, broke out fourth-floor windows and tossed a stationary bike, chairs and mattresses outside Saturday in the latest disturbance over concerns about the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions that have limited visits and stalled court proceedings, officials said.

Dozens of law enforcement officers worked for hours before bringing the riot at the St. Louis City Justice Center under control shortly before 10 a.m., a spokesman for Mayor Lyda Krewson, Jacob Long, said. About 115 inmates were involved, said Long, who described the group as "extremely violent and noncompliant" in an interview with The Associated Press.

One corrections officer was attacked and treated at a hospital for his injuries before being released, Long said. No detainees were hurt, he said.

Video posted on social media by passersby showed inmates standing near three windows on the fourth floor that had been smashed out. Some carried signs or tossed items, some ablaze, to the sidewalk below. Firefighters used a hose to put out the fires.

AP

Inmates yell from broken windows at the St. Louis Justice Center, known as the city jail, on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021 in St. Louis, Mo.

Long didn't have a cost estimate for the damage but described it as "fairly extensive."

"There are some burn marks on the front of the building. They destroyed the inside of their floor and threw all sorts of stuff outside. ... They flooded the floors, clogged the toilets, clogged the drains, so there is water damage," Long said.

One issue that played a roll in the mayhem was a locking problem that allows inmates to free themselves from their cells by tampering with the locks, said Jimmie Edwards, the city's director of public safety. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports that officials have been dealing with the problem since December.

Long said 65 inmates were transferred from the downtown jail and into the St. Louis Medium Security Institution, also known as the workhouse. He also said that law enforcement has talked to the prosecutor's office and that the potential exists that some of those involved could face additional charges.

In late December and early January, dozens of inmates were transferred from the St. Louis City Justice Center after two separate disturbances. Officials have said inmates were upset about conditions in the jail amid the pandemic.

Although there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the 633 people jailed at the St. Louis Justice Center as of Friday, tensions have been simmering.

"I imagine they are under the same amount of stress due to COVID restrictions like the rest of us are," Long said. "Courts haven't been hearing cases in the 22nd Judicial Circuit. Their family visits have been restricted. But also they are acting out and that is the current situation."

Activists have protested conditions at the workhouse for years, but plans to close it have stalled, with backers of keeping it open saying it provides a way to space out inmates amid the pandemic.

"These events demonstrate the need to have two facilities at this time," Long said. ***(AP)***

Biden back in Delaware with moving on his weekend to-do list

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—On President Joe Biden's weekend to-do list? Moving.

Biden flew aboard Air Force One for the first time as president on Friday, but not on a trip to sell his $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief plan or to confer with a U.S. ally.

He just went home, to Delaware, to help his wife, Jill, figure out what other "stuff" they need in their "other house," meaning the White House.

'It's a great honor," Biden said of flying aboard Air Force One as president. "But I didn't think about it, to tell you the truth. I was reading the paper."

He said he went to his home near Wilmington for the weekend "to see my grandchildren and to hang out with Jill to get the rest of the stuff we have to move from our house to the other house." Biden's son Hunter also turned 51 on Thursday.

Biden flew even as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that Americans avoid travel because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The White House said the trip would be far less risky for Biden, who is at higher risk because he is 78, than the sort of commercial travel that people are being urged to put on hold.

"Any president of the United States, Democrat or Republican, obviously takes Air Force One, a private plane, when they travel," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said hours before Biden's inaugural flight.

Biden told reporters shortly after landing in Delaware that the plane was much like the one he flew as vice president for eight years, "only it's much nicer."

Biden has made controlling the pandemic the central focus of the early work of his presidency. His team has repeatedly emphasized that he will model safe behavior for the nation.

Any time the president travels, an entourage of support staff, security personnel and media travels with him.

The CDC's guidance notes that "travel increases your chance of spreading and getting COVID-19" and that the agency "recommends that you do not travel at this time." But it says people who must travel should first complete their COVID-19 vaccinations, if they're eligible, and wait two weeks after getting the second dose before embarking on travel.

Biden got his second dose of the coronavirus vaccine more than three weeks ago.

Biden and his aides have been meticulous about how they go about their business as they try to reduce the chances of infection among White House staffers. Mask wearing is mandatory throughout the White House complex, much of the administration is working remotely and the duration and size of meetings has been limited.

Biden also has made few appearances outside the White House complex during the first weeks of his presidency—all for official business or to attend church.

The trip for Biden, who spent decades in the Senate and eight years as vice president, marked his first time on Air Force One in more than 20 years. He flew to South America with President Bill Clinton in 2000 as Clinton announced $1.3 billion in aid to help Colombia battle drug traffickers.

For security reasons, the vice president travels separately from the president and relies on the more modest Air Force Two aircraft for out-of-town travel.

For the 25-minute flight from Joint Base Andrews in Maryland to the New Castle Air National Guard Base, Biden flew on the smaller C-32 model from the Air Force's fleet.

It is a specially configured version of the Boeing 757-200 commercial intercontinental airliner, compared to the iconic VC-25A, which is a modified Boeing 747.

Biden's predecessor, former President Donald Trump, didn't hide his affection for Air Force One, perhaps the greatest perk of the job.

But Trump was not a fan of the Kennedy-era blue and white color scheme that is known the world over. Trump viewed the design as dated, too muted and insufficiently patriotic, and announced plans in 2019 to overhaul the color scheme using the colors of the American flag. He kept a model of his planned overhaul on display in the Oval Office.

Psaki has said that a new Air Force One paint job isn't on Biden's priority list.

"I can confirm for you here that the president has not spent a moment thinking about the color scheme of Air Force One," she said from the briefing room.

ACROSS THE NATION

1 dead, several injured in shooting at Chicago-area hotel

BLOOMINGDALE, Ill. (AP)—A shooting early Saturday during a large gathering at a suburban Chicago hotel left one man dead and several other people wounded, police said. The shooting occurred during "some type of large get-together" among guests at the Indian Lakes Hotel in Bloomingdale, according to Bloomingdale Public Safety Director Frank Giammarese. Investigators were still piecing together what happened, he said, but "it appears that there were a couple of different groups attending different events at the hotel" when "something transpired and that's when the shooting took place, mostly in the hallways at the hotel." People were fleeing the hotel when officers arrived about 2:35 a.m. in response to a report of shots fired on the fifth floor. Officers found "multiple apparent gunshot victims" inside, police said in a news release. James McGill Jr., 27, of Chicago, was pronounced dead at a hospital, according to the Cook County medical examiner's office, the Chicago Sun-Times reported.

Florida: Slain FBI agent remembered for protecting children

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)—A slain FBI agent was remembered for her strength, infectious laugh, love of family and commitment to protecting children during a memorial service Saturday. Agents Laura Schwartzenberger, 43, and Daniel Alfin, 36, were gunned down Tuesday while serving a search warrant at the Broward County home of a child pornography suspect. The service for Schwartzenberger was held at the Miami Dolphins' football stadium. A separate service for Alfin will be held there Sunday. "There are no good words to make sense of a loss like this, no good words for a day like Tuesday, or like today," said FBI Director Christopher Wray. "There's a heaviness in our hearts and a burden unlike any other, because there is nothing more devastating to the FBI family than the loss of an agent in the line of duty." Schwartzenberger's casket was draped with an American flag as it was brought out to the field as bagpipers played. The flag was later folded into a triangle and presented to her family by Wray. She was given a 21-gun salute during the service.

Asia

2,000 protest army takeover in Yangon

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—About 2,000 protesters rallied against the military takeover in Myanmar's biggest city on Sunday and demanded the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, whose elected government was toppled by the army that also imposed an internet blackout.

Protest crowds have grown bigger and bolder since Monday's coup.

Labor union and student activists and members of the public chanted "Long live Mother Suu" and "Down with military dictatorship" at a major intersection near Yangon University.

Police in riot gear blocked the main entrance to the university. Two water cannon trucks were parked nearby.

The protesters held placards calling for freedom for Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, who were put under house arrest and charged with minor offenses, seen by many as providing a legal veneer for their detention.

On Saturday, new military authorities cut most access to the internet, making Twitter and Instagram inaccessible. Facebook had already been blocked earlier in the week—though not completely effectively.

The U.S. Embassy called on the military to give up power and restore the democratically elected government, release those detained, lift all telecommunications restrictions, and refrain from violence.

"We support the right of the people of Myanmar to protest in support of the democratically elected government and their right to freely access information," it said in a tweet.

AP

In this image from video, protesters wearing hard hats flash the three-fingered salute while they march in Yangon, Myanmar Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021.

The communication blockade is a stark reminder of the progress Myanmar is in danger of losing after Monday's coup plunged the nation back under direct military rule after a nearly decade-long move toward greater openness and democracy. During Myanmar's previous five decades of military rule, the country was internationally isolated and communication with the outside world strictly controlled.

Suu Kyi's five years as leader since 2015 had been Myanmar's most democratic period despite the military retaining broad powers the continued use of repressive colonial-era laws and the persecution of minority Rohingya Muslims.

Sunday's rally came a day after about 1,000 people—factory workers and students prominent among them—marched down a main street in Yangon. They were met by more than 100 riot police.

There was no violence reported. Similar-sized demonstrations took place in at least two other areas of Yangon as well as in Mandalay, the second-largest city. At Yangon's City Hall, protesters presented flowers to police.

Nearly 300 elected lawmakers from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party were supposed to have taken their seats last Monday in a new session of Parliament following November elections when the military announced it was taking power for a year.

The military accused Suu Kyi and her party of failing to act on its complaints that last the election was marred by fraud, though the election commission said it had no found no evidence to support the claims.

US, China top diplomats discuss key issues, show differences

BEIJING (AP)—The top American and Chinese diplomats spoke Saturday in the first major exchange between the countries since President Joe Biden took office and touched on several critical issues that have strained their ties.

China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed in a phone call tension points in the bilateral relationship between the two, notably the situation in Xinjiang, home to the Uighur minority whose treatment is heavily criticized in the West, as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The two statements reaffirmed the different positions of the countries, which have clashed on issues from trade to Beijing's crackdown in Hong Kong to increased U.S. support for self-ruled democratic Taiwan. U.S.-China relations have fallen to new lows in the past few years, accelerated in part by former President Donald Trump starting a trade war with Beijing and blaming it for the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 2 million people globally.

Blinken said the U.S. would work with allies to hold China "accountable for its efforts to threaten stability in the Indo-Pacific, including across the Taiwan Strait."

He said that the United States will continue to stand up for human rights and democratic values, including in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, according to the State Department statement.

Yang said that at present, "the Sino-U.S. relationship is at a crucial juncture."

"The Chinese government's policy towards the U.S. has always maintained a high degree of stability and continuity," he was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua News Agency.

He urged Washington "to correct the mistakes made over a period of time and work with China to uphold the spirit of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation and focus on cooperation, manage differences as well as promote the healthy and stable development of China-U.S. relations."

World

2 DAYS BEFORE VOTE

Somalia's meeting on troubled election fail

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—A meeting on Somalia's troubled election has ended in failure as the federal government and regional states could not reach agreement on remaining issues two days before the scheduled vote, and President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed on Saturday blamed unnamed "foreign interventions."

Lawmakers in parliament booed the president, pounding their desktops, as he addressed them after days of discussions fizzled. He accused Puntland and Jubbaland states of refusing to support an agreement last September on the electoral process.

"I've made every effort," said the president, who seeks a second four-year term. "Don't make us feel ashamed before the international community, and don't discourage our people."

He added: "There's still some hope that we can move forward, we just need to set another time for a meeting to solve our problems, and all these issues rest on the shoulders of parliament."

But the president's critics accuse him of delaying to extend his current mandate. The September agreement allows for the president and others to stay in office after Monday's election date if needed, but United Nations special representative James Swan has warned that going beyond that day brings "an unpredictable political situation in a country where we certainly don't need any more of that."

The uncertainty is ripe for exploitation by the Somalia-based al-Shabab extremist group, which has threatened to attack the polls and even launched a documentary series on Friday criticizing the president and the electoral process, which it accused of being riddled with corruption.

Al-Shabab attacked the city hosting the election talks on the night the president arrived and the following night. No one was killed, but security forces on the second night killed four attackers and detained two.

Meanwhile, Somalia is adjusting to the withdrawal of some 700 U.S. military personnel, a process completed in mid-January, and is faces another security jolt as a nearly 20,000-strong African Union force is set to withdraw by the end of the year.

Information Minister Osman Dubbe told reporters that another meeting on the electoral crisis will be held, "but we've made more than our fair share in making concessions to federal member states."

The Jubbaland leader, Ahmed Madobe, asserted to reporters that the president "spoke to me in a disgusting way ... He keeps accusing us of being supported and manipulated by (neighboring) Kenya." Somalia late last year broke off diplomatic relations with Kenya, accusing it of meddling. Kenya has denied it.

Madobe also objected to the recent deployment of federal troops to a border community in his region next to Kenya, calling it an attempt to undermine his authority.

"I tried everything I could to solve this crisis in the best logical way together with the rest of the federal member states, but it was always the president who refused," Madobe said.

With Carnival scrapped, Rio's Sambadrome hosts vaccinations

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—In a normal year, Rio de Janeiro's Sambadrome would be preparing for its great moment of the year: the world's most famous Carnival parade.

But a week before what should be the start of Carnival, the pandemic has replaced pageantry, with the great celebration put on hold until next year as Rio struggles to quash a rise in COVID-19 cases.

The Rio mayor's office opened a drive-thru immunization station Saturday at the Sambadrome, where a line of cars queued up on a broad avenue built for floats.

"This is usually a place of pleasure. Today it is too, because we are exercising an act of citizenship and we are opening the Sambadrome to vaccinate, " said Paulo Roberto Machado, a 68-year-old nurse who teaches at the Veiga de Almeida University.

Machado has taken part in 40 years of Carnival parades here, but on Saturday he was coordinating 20 volunteer nursing and medical students vaccinating people over 90 years old.

"The vaccine represents the hope of better days, of returning to normality, to what we did before," Machado said.

Rio's city government officially suspended Carnival and warns it will have no tolerance for those who try to celebrate with open street parades or clandestine parties, saying it is monitoring social media to detect any.

Paes, who often participates in the parade at the Sambadrome, asked citizens not to be "idiots" by ignoring the rules and buying tickets to parties that will not be allowed. "It's a cat-and-mouse game looking to punish those who want party", the mayor said.

The cancellation has created a deep economic hole for many businesses that depend on the crowds.

Rio's hotel occupancy rate normally reaches about 80% in the hot summer months and 100% during Carnival. It's now at roughly 50-60%, according to Alfredo Lopes, the president of Rio's Hospitality Workers Union.

Thousands of Cariocas, as the city's residents are called, also have been idled at the samba schools where they build floats and sew costumes for the vast crowds.

The pandemic has hit hard in Rio, where the authorities have counted more than 17,600 deaths from COVID-19 – the most of any city in Brazil, topping even Sao Paulo, which has nearly twice its population.

Margareth Dalcomo, a professor of respiratory medicine at the state-funded Oswaldo Cruz Foundation in Rio, said that the city is paying the consequences for a lack of municipal management in health in recent years.

"Rio had a political and administrative problem that had an impact on poor quality medical care, and it is also poorer than Sao Paulo," Dalcomo told The Associated Press, noting that many residents live in Rio's more than 700 slums, known as favelas.

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

Ways other than **diet, exercise** to **stay healthy** while at home

By COURTNEY KUEPPERS
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

The coronavirus outbreak has upended a sense of normalcy and daily routines, which may be affecting your typical health and wellness regimen as well.

And while health experts say maintaining a healthy weight is important, you don't have to go overboard to avoid gaining weight right now.

"I'm not suggesting starting a strict diet or intense exercise program while sheltering in place, but there are some simple things you can do to prevent weight gain and protect yourself not only from Covid-19-related complications, but also from diseases such as diabetes and heart disease," Dr. Melina Jampolis wrote in an article for CNN.

Make stress management a priority

Amid the coronavirus outbreak, it's important to take care of your mental health as well as your physical health, experts note.

"I know, it isn't easy. Balancing homeschooling, financial challenges, cabin fever, social isolation and illness is stressful, but stress can contribute to poor eating choices and increase fat deep in your belly (underneath the muscle) that can contribute to heart disease and diabetes," Dr. Jampolis wrote in the CNN article.

Additionally, the CDC recommends the following measure to look out for your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak:

Pay attention to what you're buying

When you go to the grocery store, or order supplies to be delivered, pay attention to what you're adding to your cart. Try to stay away from having too much junk food in the house to avoid temptation.

Getting enough water and servings of fruits and vegetables is also recommended.

More tips on cooking amid the pandemic can be found here.

Get a good night's rest

If you've been having trouble sleeping lately, a new study shows that you're not alone.

The study, commissioned by Sleep Standards, found that nearly 77% of Americans have lost sleep over the coronavirus pandemic.

Sleep is an essential part of all-around health.

"Both excess sleep and inadequate sleep have been linked to weight gain, increased appetite and worsening blood sugar control, so try your best not to completely abandon your sleep schedule," according to CNN.

Stay social

Just because you're sheltering in place, doesn't mean you have to be socially isolated. In fact, the World Health Organization even encouraged experts to move away from calling it "social distancing" and instead opt for "physical distancing."

Maintaining a sense of connection with people in your life can help keep a sense of normalcy, which can help keep you healthier all around.

"It occurred to me from the beginning that this was an unfortunate choice of language to talk about 'social distance', when actually what was meant was 'physical distance,'" Martin W Bauer, a London-based sociology professor told Al Jazeera. "It is good that WHO finally tried to correct an early error of mistaking physical distance for social distance. In these strange times of the virus, we want clear physical distance, but at the same time, we want people to remain close to each other 'socially.'"

Tips for managing stress

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly disrupted everyone's lives, creating a lot of stress. You might not realize it, but that stress can affect your health. Frequent headaches, trouble sleeping, fatigue, muscle pains and an upset stomach are just a few of the symptoms that stress can cause in your life.

Everyone has a "stressometer," according to Dr. Craig Sawchuk, a Mayo Clinic psychologist. It's an indication from your body that stress is affecting your overall health.

"So one way that we think people experience stress is physically. So we may experience it in our stomach. Our sleep gets disrupted. We feel a lot more tense," says Dr. Sawchuk. "We can also see it emotionally, sometimes more of that irritability or sometimes even flattening of emotions. Sometimes we see it in terms of how we think, whether it be it's difficult to concentrate, we're worrying or ruminating more, or sometimes how we behave. Sometimes we tend to withdraw, or maybe our eating or drinking starts to pick up. So it's really important that we pay attention to our own stressometer."

If you're experiencing physical signs of stress, Dr. Sawchuk says relaxation techniques, such as meditation, focused breathing or massage, can help. Maintaining a good sleep routine and eating a healthy, balanced diet is important. Regular exercise also can be a stress reliever. And avoid tobacco use, excess caffeine and alcohol.

"If we're struggling with difficulties with our thinking, sometimes being able to journal the worries—writing them down in ways to challenge them to try to look at things more flexibly—can also be helpful, as well," says Dr. Sawchuk. "If we find that we're withdrawing more, then it's good, and it's important for us to pay attention to that and to set goals of reaching out to healthy others in our lives as well, too."

Recognizing how stress is affecting others and reaching out to them is important, too.

"So at least inviting in a conversation about that, making them aware of it, and not turning it into a fight or conflict. Just like: 'Hey, you know what, I've noticed that you've been acting this way. Have you been noticing that, too?'" says Dr. Sawchuk. "For many people, just even being aware of maybe acting in a particular kind of way or responding in a kind of way can actually help them start to make some adjustments and some changes on their own." ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Information in this post was accurate at the time of its posting. Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientific understanding, along with guidelines and recommendations, may have changed since the original publication date.

Life & Style

$22,000 flute lost on Chicago train turns up in pawn shop

CHICAGO (AP)—Anyone who's left so much as a hat on a Chicago Transit Authority train knows that whatever leaves the station without its owner often is gone forever.

Except, apparently, a $22,000 gold and silver flute.

Donald Rabin is once again holding—and playing—the flute left to him by his grandmother that he forgot on a train seat when he hopped off last week in the Logan Square neighborhood.

"I'm just thankful that I have the flute in my hand, that I can make music again and I can make people smile," said Rabin, a 23-year-old Boston-based flutist.

AP

Donald Rabin plays the flute after Detective George Hilbring retrieved and returned it to him during a news conference at the 14th District Police Station on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021.

Rabin was riding a Blue Line train from O'Hare International Airport during a layover before his return to the Berklee College of Music in Boston. When he got off, he realized he'd left behind his flute.

He said he rode the train for hours in hopes of finding the flute. When he came up empty, he reported the missing instrument to police and took to social media to tell people about what happened.

According to the Chicago Tribune, a CNN reporter told Rabin as he was about to fly out of Chicago that there was a comment on Facebook about the flute showing up in a pawn shop, that a homeless man had found it and used it as collateral for a $550 loan.

The pawnshop owner, Gabe Cocanate, was holding onto the flute, trying to determine if it was as valuable as it looked, when he and his wife saw the story of the missing flute on the news.

So when the homeless man returned to the shop, "I go, 'Listen man, it's been all over the news. It's not your flute,'" Coconate told the Chicago Sun-Times.

Police picked up the flute and contacted Rabin, who flew back to Chicago this week, retrieved it and treated officers to a brief concert.

Christopher Plummer got a third act worth singing about

Plummer

It's one of the great Hollywood ironies that Christopher Plummer didn't like the film that made him a legend. He was an actor's actor and had cut his teeth doing Shakespeare. "The Sound of Music," he thought, was sentimental shlock. And he wasn't alone—reviews at the time were famously terrible. Then, like a personal curse, it would go on to become a universally beloved classic. He'd played Henry V and Hamlet and yet Captain von Trapp, he said in 1982, followed him around "like an albatross."

But even Plummer, who died Friday at the age of 91, lived long enough to soften a bit. And why wouldn't he? He also got to enjoy something that so few actors do: A genuine third act with terrific roles as "60 Minutes" correspondent Mike Wallace in Michael Mann's "The Insider," a widower who comes out later in life in Mike Mills' "Beginners" and, most recently, a slain mystery writer in Rian Johnson's whodunnit "Knives Out." He got three Academy Award nominations in one decade and, at age 82, would become the oldest actor to ever win an Oscar (for "Beginners"). He still holds that title.

"You're only two years older than me, darling. Where have you been all my life?" he said to his Oscar in 2012. "When I first emerged from my mother's womb, I was already rehearsing my Academy thank you speech. But it was so long ago, mercifully for you I've forgotten it."

Dapper and dashing with an aristocratic air, Plummer could have been a leading man without the talent. With it he was a star with a character actor's spirit, which he later would attribute his longevity to.

"I'm thrilled that I turned into a character actor quite early on. I hated being a poncey leading man," he told Vanity Fair in 2015. "You really start to worry about your jawline. Please."

Fox Business cancels 'Lou Dobbs Tonight' after a decade

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Fox Business Network's "Lou Dobbs Tonight," whose host has trumpeted unfounded assertions of voter fraud in the 2020 election, has been canceled.

In a statement Friday, Fox News Media said the move was part of routine programming alterations that it had foreshadowed in an announcement last fall.

Fox News Media "regularly considers programming changes and plans have been in place to launch new formats as appropriate post-election, including on Fox Business—this is part of those planned changes," the company said.

Whether the cancellation ends Dobbs' career with Fox Business wasn't addressed, and the company had no further comment. The former CNN host started his show at the channel in March 2011, and it became among the most-watched business news channel programs.

The statement appeared to distance the cancellation from a multibillion-dollar defamation lawsuit filed Thursday against Fox and three of its hosts, including Dobbs, by the election technology company Smartmatic. In a previous statement, Fox News said it would "vigorously defend against this meritless lawsuit in court."

The replacement for "Lou Dobbs Tonight" will be announced soon, Fox News said. The show last aired on Friday, with a guest host sitting in for Dobbs, who had no immediate statement.

An interim show, "Fox Business Tonight," will air starting 5 p.m. Eastern Monday with rotating hosts Jackie DeAngelis and David Asman and repeat at 7 p.m. EST.

In December, Smartmatic sent a letter threatening legal action to Fox and two other networks, Newsmax and One America News Network, also popular with supporters of former President Donald Trump.

That month, Fox aired pretaped segments in which a voting technology expert said he hadn't seen any evidence that Smartmatic software was used to alter vote counts. The segments aired on Dobbs' program and on Fox News Channel shows with Maria Bartiromo and Jeanine Pirro.

Mom calls the shots in love life of her middle-aged son

DEAR ABBY: My husband died 11 months ago, and I thought I was ready to date. I dated a guy I'll call Ken for six months, but things went south because it felt weird. My question is, is it normal for a 57-year-old man to still be living with his mom?

Abby, Ken's mom said bad things in front of me. She told her son that if he's going to have sex with me, he might as well live with me. (We never had sex.) Another time she didn't want me to wear shorts, hold Ken's hand or even sit with him at their house. Why? Do I need help?

YOUNG-ISH WIDOW IN ILLINOIS

DEAR WIDOW: A single man living with his mom is unusual, but not necessarily abnormal. Ken's mother's behavior, however, was not normal or acceptable. The extent to which this man's mother controls his dating life is over the top.

Apparently, she perceives you as a threat, and she doesn't want to "lose" her 57-year-old son. You don't need help; SHE does. So does Ken, who appears to be her hostage. The tie that binds him to her may be emotional or financial, or those apron strings would have been severed decades ago.

DEAR ABBY: My friend and I are planning a road trip. We live in different parts of the country, so he'll be flying to my city, where we will start the trip. We plan to split the cost of car rental, gas and hotels. However, I was assuming that he would pay his own airfare, and he was assuming that we would split it like everything else.

What's normal in situations like this? Is it normal to pay one's own airfare and expect costs to even out in the future when the other person flies to you? Or is it normal to split the cost each time? The road trip isn't at risk because of this, but I want to set the right precedent for future vacations we take together.

ROAD TRIPPING IN IOWA

DEAR ROAD TRIPPING: This is something you need to discuss further with your friend. Do you consider his getting there a part of your shared vacation, or do you feel your responsibility begins when he arrives? There are no hard-and-fast rules about this, and frankly, I think it depends upon your financial situations.

DEAR ABBY: My husband passed away unexpectedly. It was and is a tremendous loss to my two daughters and to me.

While writing my thank-you cards to individuals who attended his viewing and church service, I noticed someone had written "Mick Jagger" as attending his viewing and "Rod Stewart" as attending his church service. I was floored and deeply hurt when I realized the handwriting belonged to one of our pallbearers—my husband's sister's husband. Our teenage daughters also saw it and told me they thought it was disrespectful.

I don't know if I should tell my sister-in-law or let it go. I want to ask him why he would do such a thing. Or am I overreacting?

HURT IN TEXAS

DEAR HURT: No, you are not overreacting. What your brother-in-law did was, to put it mildly, insensitive. A funeral memorial book is the wrong place to attempt a bad joke. By all means tell your sister-in-law about it. And when you do, be sure to mention how it affected you and your daughters. You all deserve an apology for his inappropriate behavior.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

THERE'S SUSIE! HEH HEH! WATCH ME KNOCK HER FILLINGS LOOSE!
YAAA!
PIFF
YOU KNOW, I THOUGHT EARTH'S GRAVITY FELT EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG TODAY.
I GUESS THAT EXPLAINS HOW YOU SPILLED YOUR OATMEAL DOWN THE HEATER THIS MORNING.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

DAD THINKS COFFEE SPIES ARE AFTER HIS COFFEE-MAKER IDEA.
OH, I KNOW.
HE TOLD ME ABOUT THEM.
HE GETS THESE IDEAS.
JUST HUMOR HIM, OKAY?
2-8

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

THIS ARTICLE SAYS THAT THE LARGEST BURGER EVER WAS 5000 POUNDS.
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE FOOLISH TO ORDER A MEAL WITH THAT?
YEAH, SO I WOULD PROBABLY SKIP THE FRIES...

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Wrigley product
4 On edge
9 Dazzle
12 Palindromic constellation
13 Homer classic
14 Hot temper
15 Avian sounds
17 PBS funder
18 Roswell visitors
19 Merchant
21 Prepare leftovers
24 Norwegian saint
25 "— Blue?"
26 Spy org.
28 Sports figures
31 Bands' bookings
33 Tube top
35 Mideast airline
36 Moral principle
38 Blue
40 Caustic solution
41 Fir coat
43 Elevated
45 Pack tightly
47 Earth Day mo.
48 Dogpatch adjective
49 Military dining areas
54 Gmail alternative
55 Pop star John
56 Fine, to NASA
57 Score units (Abbr.)
58 Dickens title starter
59 Stocking stuffer

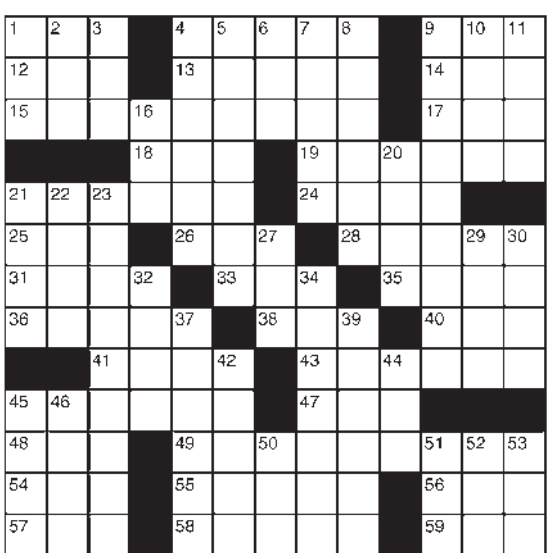
DOWN

1 Prattle
2 Swiss canton
3 Scratch the surface
4 Mini breath mint
5 Stretchy
6 Zero
7 Spirited attack
8 Collectible cars
9 Unexpected gains
10 Sandwich cookie
11 Put on
16 Actor Billy — Williams
20 Cager Archibald
21 Fury
22 Send forth
23 Whiskey cocktails
27 Small batteries
29 Diggs of "Rent"
30 Coaster
32 Thailand, once
34 Sunshade
37 Yalta's peninsula
39 "Frasier" character
42 Prepared to pray
44 A Gershwin brother
45 Applaud
46 Laugh-a-minute
50 Depot (Abbr.)
51 Long. crosser
52 Privy
53 Cloud setting

Solution time: 26 mins.

C	P	A		A	B	C		B	R	I	N	E
J	R	N		I	R	A		E	A	T	U	P
L	O	N		D	E	S	D	E	M	O	N	A
A	M	O		S	A	T	Y	R				
G	O	Y	A		I	S	E		U	B	E	H
			D	O	H		D	E	S	O	T	O
A	V	I	A	N				M	I	N	D	Y
D	E	S	P	O	T		F	U	N			
D	E	P	T		E	T	A		G	N	A	W
			B	R	A	K	E		I	F	I	
D	E	S	C	R	I	B	E	D		N	O	N
A	L	I	B	I		O	R	G		J	O	E
H	O	R	S	E		O	S	E		A	L	S

Last Friday's Answer 02/08



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Seth Green, 47; Mary Steenburgen, 68; Robert Klein, 79; Nick Nolte, 80.

Happy Birthday: Reflect, and you will discover a better way to deal with ongoing situations. Learn from the experience you gained over the years, and you will have the discipline to make the most of the opportunities that come your way. A friendly, kind and intelligent approach to life and those you encounter will promote the dreams you desire. Benevolence will pay off. Your numbers are 8, 11, 19, 26, 30, 38, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Take responsibility, and accomplish what you set out to do. Let your performance be your calling card when dealing with issues that determine your status, reputation or position. Pay attention to someone you love in order to avoid an unnecessary scene. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Your changing attitude will confuse those you deal with today. Try not to venture too far off the beaten trail when explaining what you expect or want. Too much of anything will complicate matters. Avoid indulgence and excessive behavior. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Live and learn. You'll be offered insight into something that you can use to get ahead. Practice what you preach; you'll avoid allowing someone the opportunity to put you on the spot or make you look bad. Handle relationships with honesty and integrity. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Concentrate on being a nurturer and making positive changes in your life and meaningful relationships. Refuse to let jealousy or possessiveness get in the way of reason. A positive attitude and benevolence will help you reach your objective. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't let work or your colleagues agitate you. Go about your business, and finish what you start. Leave no room for criticism or complaints. If you want to make a change, rely on your Leo charm to do so without conflict. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Stay poised and listen carefully. Someone you least expect will offer insight into something you find challenging. Sharing common interests will open up a conversation that results in a close and unique relationship. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Envision how you want your space to function. A couple of changes can quickly put an end to an inconvenience. Share your feelings with someone you love, and it will pave the path to a better lifestyle. Romance is favored. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Pay closer attention to detail. Look for unique ways to make your home run efficiently. Don't expect a decision you make to please everyone. A friend or relative will offer sound reasons why you should slow down and rethink your plans. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* The experience you have will help you decipher who is being upfront with you and who isn't. Trust your instincts, and make your decision clear. It's better not to linger over something that is clear cut to you. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Make a decision for the right reason. Don't let anger or stubbornness push you in a direction that will cause bad blood between you and a friend or relative. Make positive changes, and be willing to compromise. Care and share. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Be cautious when dealing with a friend, relative or peer. You'll gain more if you can avoid a fight by finding common ground. Diplomacy, respect and courtesy will pay off. Take time to let someone special know how much you love them. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You can make a positive change to the way you live life, how you do your job or what you do for a living. Take pride in what you do, and you will make an impression on someone who can help you excel. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are disciplined, imaginative and impatient. You are opportunistic and astute.

1 star: *Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes.* **2 stars:** *You can accomplish, but don't rely on others.* **3 stars:** *Focus and you'll reach your goals.* **4 stars:** *Aim high; start new projects.* **5 stars:** *Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

4						1		
	8		3	5		4		2
		3	1			9		8
	4				3		7	5
	5			6			2	
6	1		7				9	
1		8			4	2		
7		4		2	1		8	
	2							7

Difficulty Level ★ 2/08

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

4	9	5	3	1	8	2	7	6
1	2	6	7	9	4	8	5	3
3	7	8	6	2	5	4	1	9
6	8	4	1	7	9	5	3	2
7	5	3	4	6	2	1	9	8
2	1	9	5	8	3	6	4	7
9	6	7	8	5	1	3	2	4
5	3	2	9	4	6	7	8	1
8	4	1	2	3	7	9	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

PERRIER WATER Solution: 9 letters

C	E	R	A	G	U	S	E	M	J	M	C	R	S	B
S	A	X	O	T	E	D	A	P	U	H	D	H	U	U
Y	L	R	T	L	E	N	H	I	I	E	D	C	O	R
R	F	A	B	R	G	C	S	L	C	C	B	N	M	P
R	L	B	R	O	A	E	L	I	E	R	E	E	A	C
E	U	Q	U	E	N	C	H	I	N	G	A	R	F	I
B	O	L	P	G	N	A	T	N	A	O	T	F	O	L
W	R	F	A	E	L	I	T	E	F	Y	M	O	A	I
A	I	M	D	R	M	M	M	E	D	L	B	E	M	S
R	D	E	C	R	U	O	S	R	D	M	A	B	L	A
T	E	A	M	S	I	T	E	G	A	R	E	V	E	B
S	N	I	E	I	C	N	A	B	O	I	L	K	O	A
S	N	U	S	B	L	A	K	N	D	E	X	I	M	R
T	M	P	O	T	A	S	S	I	U	M	I	W	T	S
S	E	E	R	F	C	B	L	E	N	D	F	I	Z	Z

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Bamboo, Bars, Basilic, Beat, Beverage, Blend, Boil, Bubbles, Burp, Calcium, Cans, Carbonated, Case, Chill, Detox, Drink, Extracted, Famous, Fizz, Flavor, Fluoride, Foam, Free, French, Green, Iced, Juice, Kiwi, Leaf, Lemon, Lime, Magnesium, Mango, Minerals, Mint, Mixed, Museums, Natural, Party, Peach, Potassium, Quenching, Recipe, Rose, Source, Strawberry, Sugar

Last Friday's Answer: Screen

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

LeBron lifts Lakers over Pistons in 2OT

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James scored eight of his 33 points in the second overtime, Anthony Davis added 30 points and the Los Angeles Lakers narrowly avenged a loss in Detroit last month with a 135-129 victory over the undermanned Pistons on Saturday night.

Dennis Schröder had 22 points and eight assists in the defending NBA champions' fourth consecutive victory since that 107-92 loss to the Pistons nine days ago.

The Lakers committed a season-high 23 turnovers and wasted several chances to close out the win in regulation. Only James' brilliance in the second overtime prevented the Lakers from being swept by the 5-18 Pistons, who were playing without Derrick Rose and Blake Griffin on the second night of a back-to-back set.

Moments after James hit the go-ahead layup in double OT, he made a tough step-back 3-pointer with 1:17 left and added another step-back 27-footer with 34 seconds to play.

AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) dunks against the Detroit Pistons during the second half of an NBA game Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Kings 119, Nuggets 114

In Sacramento, Harrison Barnes had 28 points and seven rebounds to help offset a career-high 50 points by Denver's Nikola Jokic, and the Kings beat the Nuggets to complete a season sweep.

Barnes made five 3-pointers, shot 10 of 16 overall and scored 13 points in the third quarter. Barnes also made a pair of free throws with 0.5 seconds remaining.

Jokic just missed adding to his franchise record of 46 triple-doubles with another huge night. The big man had 12 assists and eight rebounds and scored 23 points in the fourth quarter.

Mavericks 134, Warriors 132

In Dallas, Luka Doncic tied his career high with 42 points in a scoring duel with Stephen Curry, leading the Mavericks over Golden State.

The prime-time matchup on national TV lived up to the billing, with Curry hitting a season-high 11 3-pointers on the way to 57 points for the Warriors. It was the second-highest total of his career, behind the 62 points he scored in a win over Portland about a month ago.

Doncic was 12 of 23 from field, 7 for 12 from 3-point range and 11 of 14 on free throws with 11 assists and seven rebounds as the Mavericks ended a six-game home losing streak.

76ers 124, Nets 108

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid scored 33 points and Ben Simmons had 16 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists to lead the 76ers over the short-handed Brooklyn.

Tobias Harris added 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Eastern Conference leaders, who have won five of six.

James Harden had 26 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for Brooklyn, which was without stars Kyrie Irving and Kevin Durant.

Knicks 110, Trail Blazers 99

In New York, Elfrid Payton and Julius Randle scored 22 points apiece to power the Knicks over Portland.

Six players scored in double figures for New York, which has won two straight and improved to 11-13. RJ Barrett scored 18 points, Alec Burks added 16 and fellow reserve Immanuel Quickley had 12.

Damian Lillard scored 29 points in his return to the lineup but Portland had its two-game winning streak end. Lillard, who missed Portland's 121-105 victory at Philadelphia on Thursday with a strained abdomen, started and played 38 minutes.

Bulls 118, Magic 92

In Orlando, Zach LaVine bounced back from a poor performance a night earlier and scored 39 points as Chicago routed the injury-plagued Magic.

LaVine scored just two points in the first three quarters of Friday's loss to the Magic and responded to coach Billy Donovan's request that he play with more aggression early in the game. He scored 22 points in the first half and chipped in seven rebounds and four assists as the Bulls snapped a two-game losing streak.

Spurs 111, Rockets 106

In Houston, DeMar DeRozan scored 30 points and San Antonio held off a late charge from the Rockets.

The Spurs led by 10 in the fourth quarter, but it was tied late in the game before DeRozan scored the next five points to give the Spurs a 107-102 lead with a minute to go.

John Wall had 27 points and Eric Gordon scored 26 off the bench as the Rockets lost for the second time in three games following a six-game winning streak.

Hawks 132, Raptors 121

In Atlanta, Trae Young had 28 points and 13 assists, Clint Capela finished with 23 points and 16 rebounds, and the Hakws topped Toronto to snap a three-game losing streak.

Chris Boucher scored 29 points off the bench to lead the Raptors, who were going for a season-high four-game winning streak. Fred VanVleet added 22 points and Kyle Lowry had 20.

Bucks 124, Cavaliers 99

In Cleveland, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 24 points and 11 rebounds, Jrue Holiday scored 20 and Milwaukee beat the Cavaliers for the second time in two days.

Khris Middleton added 20 points and Bryn Forbes had 18 on 6-of-6 shooting from 3-point territory for the Bucks, who broke open the game with a 42-18 run spanning the third and fourth quarters and won their fourth in a row.

Pelicans 118, Grizzlies 109

In New Orleans, Brandon Ingram had 27 points, 12 rebounds and a career-high four blocks, and Zion Williamson capped a 29-point night with a game-sealing dunk as the Pelicans beat Memphis for their third straight victory.

Eric Bledsoe scored 11 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, when the Pelicans fell behind by seven before storming ahead by outscoring the Grizzlies 23-7 during the final seven minutes. Lonzo Ball added 16 points for New Orleans, which broke open a close game despite playing one night after pulling out a tight road game in Indiana.

Thunder 120, Timberwolves 118

In Oklahoma City, Darius Bazley made the tiebreaking layup with 1:16 to play, and the Thunder edged Minnesota after blowing a 23-point lead.

The Thunder scored a team-record 83 points in the first half, then managed only 13 in the third quarter. Minnesota came all the way back to take the lead in the final period before Oklahoma City recovered.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic

	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	17	7	.708	0.0
Boston	12	9	.571	3.5
Brooklyn	14	11	.560	3.5
New York	11	13	.458	6.0
Toronto	10	13	.435	6.5

Central

Milwaukee	15	8	.652	0.0
Indiana	12	11	.522	3.0
Cleveland	10	14	.417	5.5
Chicago	9	13	.409	5.5
Detroit	5	17	.227	9.5

Southeast

Atlanta	11	12	.478	0.0
Charlotte	10	13	.435	1.0
Orlando	9	15	.375	2.5
Miami	8	14	.364	2.5
Washington	5	14	.263	4.0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific

	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Lakers	18	6	.750	0.0
LA Clippers	17	7	.708	1.0
Phoenix	12	9	.571	4.5
Golden State	12	11	.522	5.5
Sacramento	11	11	.500	6.0

Southwest

San Antonio	13	10	.565	0.0
Houston	11	11	.500	1.5
Memphis	9	9	.500	1.5
New Orleans	10	12	.455	2.5
Dallas	10	14	.417	3.5

Northwest

Utah	18	5	.783	0.0
Denver	12	10	.545	5.5
Portland	12	10	.545	5.5
Oklahoma City	10	12	.455	7.5
Minnesota	6	17	.261	12.0

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pistons in discussions on trading Rose to Knicks

MICHIGAN—The Detroit Pistons are in discussions to trade Derrick Rose to the New York Knicks, according to sources

Rose, who is inactive for Saturday's game against the Los Angeles Lakers, could reunite with former head coach Tom Thibodeau.

Thibodeau coached Rose in Chicago and Minnesota, and Rose's 2010-11 MVP came in Thibodeau's first season as coach. Rose is on the final year of his contract with a Pistons team that's going through a rebuild and without injured first-round draft pick Killian Hayes.

The Pistons are discussing Dennis Smith Jr. as a piece. Smith has struggled to find footing with the Knicks, even volunteering to go to the G League to get extra playing time.

Any potential deal would likely involve a player and a draft pick, although not the first-round selection the Knicks are owed by Dallas in the Kristaps Porzingis trade from over two years ago.

This season Rose is averaging 14.2 points and 4.2 assists in 22.8 minutes per game, and would be considered a valuable trade piece if a playoff team wanted to give the Pistons an asset.

The Pistons still have Blake Griffin's contract on the books for this season and next if he picks up his player option, so the team is being diligent on how it proceeds with new general manager Troy Weaver, who has made numerous deals since taking over in the short offseason.

Durant in quarantine

Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant will have to quarantine for seven days after having close contact with a team employee who tested positive for COVID-19.

On Friday, a team employee drove in a car with Durant three separate times—to the practice facility, back home from testing and to the arena for the game. Durant and the team employee were seemingly not wearing facemasks during these interactions.

The team employee initially tested inconclusive, which led to the mixup in Friday night's game where Durant was held back, then participated and finally pulled. The employee then tested positive, which has led to the contact tracing for Durant, who has continued to test negative.

All Nets players and other team staff have continued to test negative, including post-game last Friday. ***(AP/NBC)***

Rodgers wins 3rd MVP after historic season

NEW YORK (AP)—A pair of Aarons pulled off an NFL hat trick Saturday night.

Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers earned his third Associated Press Most Valuable Player award, while Rams defensive tackle Aaron Donald took his third top defensive player prize at NFL Honors.

Also taking home awards were two members of the Washington Football Team: quarterback Alex Smith was the Comeback Player of the Year in one of the most inspirational stories of 2020, and edge rusher Chase Young got the top defensive rookie.

Titans 2,000-yard rusher Derrick Henry won Offensive Player of the Year, and the offensive rookie honor went to Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert. Cleveland's Kevin Stefanski was the Coach of the Year, and Buffalo offensive coordinator Brian Daboll earned assistant coach honors.

Seattle quarterback Russell Wilson won the Walter Payton Man of the Year award for his work in the community.

Rodgers had perhaps the best season of his 16-year career, leading Green Bay to a 13-3 regular season, the NFC's best mark. Just a few months after questions arose about his comfort level with the Packers—and their choosing a quarterback in the first round of April's draft— Rodgers, who turned 37 in December, tore up the NFL.

Rodgers topped the league with 48 touchdown passes completion rate (70.7 percent), and a 121.5 rating. He was picked off just five times.

"It is really special to have won it in my fourth year as a starter and now to win it in my 13th year as a starter in a new offense is pretty amazing and something I am very proud of," Rodgers said. "To have sustained success and be able to play your best football at 37 in my 16th season is something I take a lot of pride in."

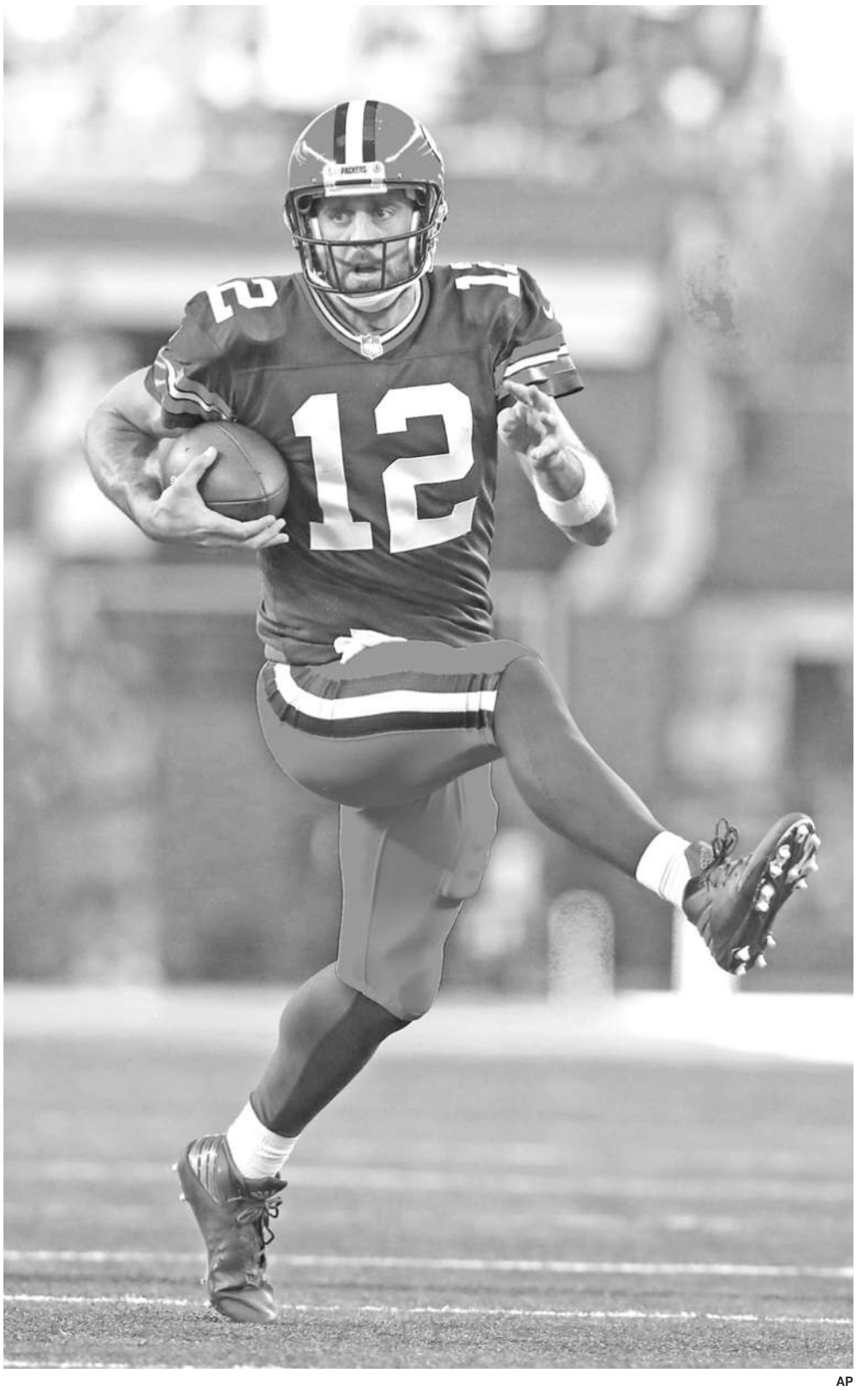
Donald, the Los Angeles Rams' unanimous All-Pro, added the 2020 top defensive player honor to his wins in 2017 and 2018. Only Pro Football Hall of Famer Lawrence Taylor (1981, '82, 86) and Houston edge rusher J.J. Watt (2012, '14, 15) have earned the award three times.

"You just named two great defensive players," he said, "so any time your name is mentioned with greats, you will be honored—especially there's only a few that have accomplished that. To be the third to do it that is truly a blessing. It shows the body of work that I have; anytime your hard work is rewarded you are going to be happy about that. It is just a blessing."

The 36-year-old Smith completed a remarkable comeback from a broken right leg that required 17 surgeries to repair. Smith stepped in to start eight games before a strained right calf in the same leg sidelined him for the postseason spot he helped the team secure.

Everyone across the league cited Smith as an inspiration.

"It is humbling when I hear that," Smith said. "I know for how long I spent thinking about and looking at the men and women who inspired me. I am stuck in the hospital bed, stuck in a wheelchair, spent countless hours googling and looking at videos of our service men and women going through the same rehab as I went through. ...



AP

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers in action during an NFL divisional playoff football game against the Los Angeles Rams, Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021, in Green Bay, Wis.

"So there were definitely people in front of me that I am so thankful for that allowed me to go down this path. And obviously I am humbled and I guess you hope that you can kind of be a link in that chain for anybody coming behind you."

Henry ran for 2,027 yards, the eighth player to surpass the magic 2,000 mark.

"Two thousand yards is always on a running back's mind, especially in the league because it is so unique," Henry said. "Always put the team goals first, then individual goals come second. But I knew we take a lot of pride in the running game and have had success, and then anything is possible with the group I am with, (so) we could accomplish it."

Stefanski's Browns snapped their postseason drought dating back to the 2003 season by going 11-5 in the rugged AFC North, then beating Pittsburgh in the wild-card round before a close loss at Kansas City.

"We never concerned ourselves with the past, we are all about moving forward," Stefanski said. "This season had its unique challenges and we focused on those each and every day and ultimately tried to put together a group of guys that would fight every single week, and I think we did that. But we were so focused on what we were doing in the here and now."

Daboll helped Buffalo to a 15-4 record and a spot in the AFC championship game as he oversaw the rapid development of quarterback Josh Allen in his third pro season. Only Green Bay with 509 scored more than Buffalo's 501 points.

Game changers: Manning leads HOF Class of 2021

NEW YORK—Though others have eclipsed him in some sections of the record book, Peyton Manning's stamp on the NFL is very much a thing of 2021 and beyond.

Manning, the quarterback whose meticulous attention to detail helped turn the 21st-century gridiron into a chessboard on turf, was awarded his spot in the Pro Football Hall of Fame on Saturday in his first year of eligibility.

The son of Saints legend Archie and brother of two-time Super Bowl champion Eli will be joined later this year in Canton by another first-ballot lock, defensive back Charles Woodson, who beat out Manning for the Heisman Trophy in 1997, and then spent nearly two decades trying to stop him. Calvin Johnson—aka "Megatron"— was also a first-ballot selection, his mere nine years of playmaking excellence with the Lions more than enough to convince the panel.

Also making it were guard Alan Faneca, who made nine Pro Bowls and missed only one game over 13 seasons with the Steelers, Jets and Cardinals; and John Lynch, the hard-hitting safety who burnished his reputation in Tampa Bay, which plays Kansas City for the Super Bowl title Sunday.

Cowboys receiver Drew Pearson, Raiders coach Tom Flores and longtime Steelers scout Bill Nunn made it in the senior, coach and contributor categories, respectively.

In a nod to COVID-19, the voters eschewed their traditional all-day meeting Saturday in favor of a virtual gathering on Jan. 19. Manning found out a few days later, with his coaches and his family delivering the news. The winners' names were made public at the NFL Honors awards ceremony Saturday night. Jaguars left tackle Tony Boselli and Dolphins linebacker Zach Thomas were among the finalists whose names were not called.

Manning going into the hall was all but preordained. That's fitting, in a way, because more than any quarterback before him, he used every minute of his preparation during the week, and then every second at the line of scrimmage during the games, doing all he could to eliminate doubt about the result of every play before it happened.

His work in the video room, his "voluntary" offseason throw-and-catch sessions with receivers, his quizzing of coaches and teammates alike during practices — all were the stuff of legend.

The end game came on Sundays, for 14 seasons with the Indianapolis Colts, then four more with the Denver Broncos, when he barked "Omaha, Omaha!!" at the line of scrimmage— we still don't know what it means— then went about dissecting defenses en route to 186 regular-season victories, a still-record five MVP awards and two Super Bowl titles in four trips.

When Manning retired after leading the Broncos to the title in 2016, he had the career records for passing yardage (71,940) and touchdowns (539), among others, and was part of the conversation as Greatest Of All Time.

Drew Brees and Tom Brady have eclipsed those numbers. Brady, playing in his 10th Super Bowl on Sunday, has shut the door on the GOAT debate, and with a win will join Manning as the second quarterback to lead two franchises to a title. Still, he's well aware of Manning's role in making the modern-day passing game what it is today.

"Like any great quarterback, there's a lot of responsibility that you take on," Brady said this week in reflecting on Manning's place in the game. "You want to make sure everything's a reflection of how you see the game and you want to make sure everyone's on the same page. And when everyone's seeing it through the same set of eyes, it's a great way to play football."

One-time University of Tennessee assistant David Cutcliffe says he knew Manning was something special when the quarterback, in advance of his freshman year, took three pages' worth of handwritten notes on a base play the Vols ran called 62 Meyer.

"He redefined preparation," Cutcliffe said during a 2013 interview. "He redefined the quality of the work that's expected of the people around him."

He ushered in an era that turned the reading of the Xs and Os from an art to a science, setting the template for a modern-day passing game very much reliant on pre-snap reads that lead to quick decisions and allow the smartest of quarterbacks to get out of bad plays before they happen.

All those smarts, of course, belied a physical gift that allowed Manning to play for 18 years, including a comeback from four delicate neck surgeries that left him unable to grip a football at first.

Serena, Novak, and Rafa chasing history

AUSTRALIA (AP)—Forget about aces or double-faults, winners or unforced errors: The statistic that has come to mean the most in tennis these days is "Grand Slam titles won."

Which is why so much attention will be paid to Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams at the Australian Open.

Play begins at Melbourne Park on Monday (Sunday EST), with Williams and Djokovic among those on the schedule and Nadal's first-round match set for Day 2. Each match for each member of that trio is a possible step on the way to some history.

"People love records, don't they?" said Chris Evert, an 18-time major champion who now is an ESPN analyst. "I, for one, think that too much is made of Grand Slam wins."

This is Nadal's first chance to grab sole possession of the men's mark for most Grand Slam singles titles. He pulled even with Roger Federer at 20 by winning the French Open in October, beating Djokovic in a lopsided final. (Federer is still sidelined after two knee operations).

Nadal has had stiffness in his back over the last two weeks, which kept him out of the ATP Cup and hampered his practice.

"The muscle is still tight, so is difficult to play with freedom of movements," he told a pre-tournament news conference Sunday. "Let's hope (the) situation keeps improving."

A second Australian Open trophy also would allow Nadal to become the first man in the Open era to win each Grand Slam tournament at least twice. He has 13 championships at Roland Garros, four at the U.S. Open, two at Wimbledon.

He still would have work to do to catch Williams: She already has 23 Slam singles titles (plus 14 in doubles and two in mixed doubles), the most by anyone in the Open era. Only one player owns more: Margaret Court, with 24—11 after professionals were admitted to major tournaments.

"It's definitely on my shoulders and on my mind," Williams said about 24. "I think it's good to be on my mind. I think it's a different burden, I should say, on my shoulders, because I'm used to it now."

AP

So much attention will be paid to, from left, Novak Djokovic, Serena Williams, and Rafael Nadal as they chase history at the Australian Open.

And even if Williams' tour of a room where some of her hardware is displayed lit up social media, she made a point of explaining she finds other ways to define her value.

"My life is way more than a trophy. There's way more to me than a championship," said Williams, who turns 40 in September and last won a major title at the 2017 Australian Open while pregnant. "For me, every time I step on the court, I know I'm this tennis player, but at the same time I'm a mom, I'm a human."

She lost in the third round in Australia a year ago, then was hampered by an Achilles issue during a semifinal loss at the U.S. Open. That same problem forced her to withdraw from the French Open before the second round.

For Djokovic, in addition to trying to break his own record for most men's titles at the Australian Open by getting No. 9, and trying to ensure he will eclipse Federer for most weeks at No. 1 in the ATP rankings, there is the matter of closing the Grand Slam gap.

Adding another major championship would give him 18 — two behind Federer and Nadal.

Other things to know about the 2021 Australian Open:

COVID-19

There aren't plans to regularly test players; 30,000 spectators will be allowed on the grounds per day, 50% of usual capacity but 30,000 more than at last year's U.S. Open. Still, the coronavirus pandemic will surely be a constant talking point the next two weeks. "I got a lot of messages from people in Europe saying, 'What's going on? Why are you not wearing a mask?' They were, like, 'What's happening?'" said 2020 runner-up Garbiñe Muguruza, a Spaniard. "And I was explaining that here, fortunately, they did well, and there is no cases, and that's why people are having a normal life." One issue that could be key: The lack of normal pre-tournament practice and preparation could lead to lackluster play or injuries.

Electronic calls

For the first time at a major tennis tournament, every match will be played without line judges present. Instead, calls will be made electronically. Most matches at the U.S. Open were done this way, but the two biggest courts retained the human element—and Djokovic was disqualified after smacking a ball that inadvertently struck a lineswoman in the throat.

Recent champs

Sofia Kenin, a 22-year-old American, will be defending her first Grand Slam title. Iga Swiatek, a 19-year-old from Poland, will be playing in a Grand Slam tournament for the first time since winning a major championship — she beat Kenin in last year's French Open final. Swiatek acknowledged feeling "more pressure than usual," adding: "I know that it's hard, sometimes, to be back on tour after a win like that."

SAIPAN

From Page 20

lay rules with the four runners on the team running the different stages along the route. Each runner will cover a distance of five kilometers, while the team will run the remaining one kilometer all the way to the start/finish line.

"We have seven teams right now (yesterday morning). Ekiden relay uses four runners per team and unlike the Christmas Island Relay, there are no repeats. Each runner has to run one segment which is five kilometers. The final 1K, the team runs together. We have a total of 28 runners that have already signed up," Dela Cruz said.

The virtual race's course map. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Teams must complete the course within this month in one single run, but Dela Cruz said some of the Saipan runners have agreed to do the race on Feb. 14.

"I just asked people who want to do it the same day because it would be more fun seeing many runners as there are no scheduled strictly running races for the year yet. People that do not have a team yet will be raffled into teams to meet new runners and have fun running with new people they have never met. There is no race clock or physical timer. Every team will use one person's cell phone or GPS watch as their timer and STRAVA app tracker to record their virtual results," Dela Cruz added.

Dela Cruz and Sapong have signed up for the virtual event along with Gerald Galang, Shuji Kuroda, Kosuke Sato, Jack "Ketson" Kabiriel, Alyona Gersonde, Jalen Lucido, Michiteru Mita, Noriko Jim, Taro Goto, Josh Joson, Travis Spaeth, Eric Abragan, Darryll De Luna, Lydia Tan, Chong Nam Lee, and several students from Saipan International School.

Runners can still sign up until this Wednesday morning as the "raffle drawing" of team members will be done in the evening. Solo runners are also welcome to take on the course. Registration is $25 with finishers getting medals and certificate of completion.

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Geckos' Tiana Cabrera, Jinju Thompson, and Kuu Nishimura completed the race.

In the 10K race, Kosuke Sato posted the fastest time at 41:41, while Whitney Altizer and Ken Song came in second and third with times of 42:03 and 43:04, respectively. Maki Narita was the top finisher in the women's division with her 45:20 and was followed by Sarka Glanchova (50:15) and Anika Snyder (50:23).

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In this 2020 file photo, Kosuke Sato, third left, poses with third placer Ken Song, second left, after winning the 10-kilometer portion of the 5th Aquathlon & 10K Run. Also in the photo are Manny Sitchon, left, and Ronald Villafria, right, of the Triathlon Association of the CNMI, which organized the event.

LeBron lifts Lakers over Pistons in 2OT

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Sports

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Saipan runners take on virtual race

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Runners on island somehow won't miss a portion of the Saipan Marathon course after signing up for a virtual race this month.

Nearly 30 Saipan runners have registered for the Hafa Half Marathon, which the Guam Running Club is organizing and dedicating to its late member Marissa David Peroy. Northern Marianas Athletics secretary general Robin Sapong worked with GRC to allow Saipan runners to do the 21K race, while Edward Dela Cruz Jr., pooled participants for the event.

With the virtual race following the half marathon distance, Sapong and Dela Cruz suggested to do the run following the 21K course in the Saipan Marathon, which this year's edition was originally scheduled for next month, but has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The half marathon course in the CNMI's biggest running event starts and ends at the American Memorial Park with runners passing through Beach Road all the way to the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio for the turnaround point. The actual 42K Saipan Marathon course also covered that route plus the road up to northern part (Banzai Cliff in Marpi) of the island.

Besides following the 21K course of the Saipan Marathon, participants in the virtual race will use the "Ekiden" re-

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MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
In this file photo, two female runners cruise along the Gov. Froilan C. Tenorio Beach Road Pathway, which will be the route for a virtual race this month.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Josh Joson, Edward Dela Cruz Jr., and Shuji Kuroda pose for a photo before training at the Oleai Sports Complex track oval last week.

Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Run set for Feb. 27

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Triathlon Association of the CNMI will have its first event for the 2021 season on Feb. 27 with the staging of the 6th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Run.

Both races will start and end at Kilili Beach Park. The aquathlon event will cover a distance of 5-kilometer run, 1K swim, and 2.5K run. The running course for the aquathlon race will be the pathway heading north to Beach Road with the turnaround point across Monika's Gallery (for 5K) and Char's Store (for 2.5K). For the 10K race, the turnaround point is the traffic light across Bank of Guam in Garapan.

So far 25 have signed up for the event with 13 of them joining the aquathlon race. Deadline for registration is on Feb. 25 and entries on race day will not be accepted. Entry fee is $20 (per person) and registration cane be made via https://www.webscorer.com/registerlist?raceid=231034 with interested participants can join either the solo or team division in the aquathlon.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this 2019 file photo, Jinju Thompson waves to the camera as she heads to the swim-run transition area at Kilili Beach during the 4th IT&E Saipan Aquathlon and 10K Pathway Run.

The 6th Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Run will be part of the series of events that TRAC will be hosting to prepare for next year's Pacific Mini Games. These races will be used to train officials, look for athletes that will represent the CNMI to the quadrennial event, and raise funds for the 2022 competition.

Last year, nearly 60 joined the Saipan Aquathlon & 10K Run with former Saipan Swim Club coach Sarah Vander Wal leading the finishers list in the aquathlon after timing in at 43:49 with split times of 18:29 (1K swim) and 26:20 (two 2.5K runs).

Joining Vander Wal in the Top 3 in the women's division were Savita Sikkel and Claire Devey, while Shuji Kuroda, Taiyo Akimaru, and Jacoby Winkfield made it to the podium in the men's division. In the relay, the SIS

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